4. SHIVA MAHAPURANA

SHIVA MAHAPURANA: INTRODUCTION

First of all, Sage Shaunak expressed his desire to Suta about knowing the means, which could help a man in this era of Kali to attainment lord Shiva, by cleansing all the impurities of his mind and rectifying his inherent demonic tendencies. Suta then described about Shiva Mahapurana - the supreme of all the Puranas, which was narrated by Lord Shiva himself and which was later on retold by Sage Vyasa with the permission of Maharshi Sanatkumar, for the benediction of common man. Suta said, "By understanding the mysteries of ShivmahaPurana and singing its praises, a man attains greater virtues than that which could be attained by being charitable or by the performance of all the `yagyas'. Contemplating on the subject matters of Shiva Mahapurana give auspicious fruits just like a 'Kalpa-taru' (A mythological tree which fulfills all the wishes). Shiv Mahapurana contains twenty-four thousand shlokas and seven Samhitas which are Vidyeshwar, Rudra, Shatrudra, Koti Rudra, Uma, Kailash, and Vayviya. Shiva Mahapurana is the best means for man's liberation.

PROPER METHOD OF LISTENING TO SHIVA PURANA

Sage Shaunak requested Suta to tell about the proper method of listening to Shiva Purana, so that the mankind gets complete benefit. Suta replied-

"First of all, an auspicious moment should be determined by an Astrologer. After that, friends and relatives should be invited, especially those who have the tendency of being away from such occasions. The sages and the virtuous people should be invited too. The 'Katha' must be help in scared places like Shiva temple, any place of pilgrimage or in one's home after doing a Bhumi Pujan of the land where one intends to held the Katha of Shiva Purana. The canopy should be well decorated." "After making a resolution and doing worship of Ganapati - the destroyer of all hurdles and obstacles the Katha should be commenced. The person who is telling the 'Katha' should be facing north and all the listeners should sit facing east. The person who is telling the 'Katha' should be a scholar and should be capable of clearing all the doubts from the listener's mind. There should be no kind of distraction during the 'Katha' period. A devotee, who listens to the Katha leaving behind all of his worldlys worries get complete benefits. A devotee should also make donations and offerings according to his capacity and capability otherwise he would become a wretched man. The Mantra 'OM NAMAH SHIVAY' should be chanted through out the period of Katha.

An uninitiated person does not have the right to listen to the Katha of Shiva Mahapurana. So a man desirous of listening to Shiva Mahapurana should first get initiated.

A devotee who has taken the vow of listening to the Katha of Shiva Mahapurana, should follow a celibate life. He should sleep on the floor and should have only fruits in the diet. He can have his normal dinner only after the completion of the Katha. The diet should be fresh and pure. He should also try to avoid sinful tendencies like lust, anger, greed, attachment and condemning other, etc. Making donations of even meager things give undiminishing virtues.

After the methodical completion of the Katha, a devotee should perform UDDYAPAN (Conclusion of the Katha), which is similar to the CHATURDASHI UDDYAPAN. The devotee should also charitably make donations to all the brahmins who have helped in the performance of Katha. On the next day the 'Path' of SHIVA GITA should be performed. If the devotee (listener of the Katha) is a householders, then he should perform 'Havan' with the ghee prepared from Cow's milk, for the pacification of the unhindered completion of the Katha. The Havan should be performed, either with the help of 'Rudra Samhita mantras' or 'Gayatri Mantra' or with the shlokas of Purana.

PART ONE VIDYESHWAR SAMHITA

SAGES ENQUIRE

Viddyeshwar Samhita which is classified into twenty five chapters, has a narration in its first chapter which goes as follows-

Once upon a time, the sages were performing a yagya at Prayag kshetra. Sage Suta came to know about this and arrived there. All the sages were very pleased to see him. They requested:-"Lord! Though we have heard many tales from you regarding the man's benediction, but today we want to listen to something special. Because in this present era of Kali, when all the castes have forgotten about their respective duties we want to know is there any way to prevent the deterioration in the human values?"

Suta replied:-

"O Great men! Your enquiry has great relevance in this era of Kali. I will certainly tell you about the way by the help of which a man can achieve benediction. Shiva Mahapurana contains the essence of Vedantic philosophy, which gives worldly pleasures as well as Salvation. Mere remembrance of it destroys all the sins of a man. One who studies the Rudra-Samhita attentively, his gravest of sins are destroyed instantaneously. One who studies Rudra-Samhita' silently, sitting in front of Bhairav-idol, all of his aspirations are fulfilled. A man gets liberated from the sin of killing a brahmin, if he studies Rudra Samhita while circulbulating around a Banyan tree."

"Kailash Samhita is even superior than Rudra Samhita, as it elaborates upon the meaning of Omkar. Shiva Mahapurana is created by lord Shiva Himself. It contains twelve Samhitas which are - Viddyeshwar, Rudra, Vinayak, Uma, Matri, Ekadash-rudra, Kailash, Shat-rudra, Koti-rudra, Sahastra Koti, Vayaviya and Dharma."

"Initially it contained one lac shlokas but it was precised to twenty-four thousand shlokas by sage Vyasa. The present Shiva Purana is the fourth one which consists of seven Samhitas. The earlier three Shiva Puranas are unavailable. The scientific analysis of the Vedantic mysteries are the main subject of this divine Shiva Purana. The study of Shiva Purana helps a

man to attain Dharma, Artha, Kam and Moksha.

Suta continued with his narration:-

"During the initial period of 'Svet Varaha Kalpa'. Six prominent sages collected near Triveni and started debating as to who was the greatest deity, among Brahma Vishnu and Mahesh. Their debate remained inconclusive, so they went to lord Brahma to seek the answer.

Lord Brahma told them:-

"O revered Sages! The source of Vishnu, Rudra all the deities including myself and all the other creations is none other Mahadeo. Union with the Shiva should be the objective of a man to attain that objective. Listening to the qualities of Lord Shiva, singing devotional songs in his praise and contemplating on him are the greatest means, which help to unite with Shiva."

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Purification of the mind by the help of doing worship and chanting the name of God is called contemplation. Singing devotional songs in the form of stotra, or hymns of the vedas or even in one's own language is called Kirtan.

The above mentioned three activities are the supreme means to attain liberation

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GREATNESS OF SHIVALINGA-PILLAR OF FIRE--OMKAR

According to Suta, if a person is incapable of following the above mentioned three activities i.e. Shravana, Kirtan and Manan then he should worship the Shivalinga. Even by doing this he can attain liberation from all the bondages of the world.

Describing about the majesty of Shivalinga, Suta says: "Lord Shiva is the manifestation of Almighty God (Brahma) himself and for this very reason he is known as Nishkal. Because of his divine beauty, Shiva is called Saguna (God with form). The term Saguna is also expressed in another way, that is Sakai. Shivalinga is worshipped since it symbolizes the form of Shiva. Lord Shiva is also considered to be Nirguna (without any qualities.)"

"In the first Kalpa of Swet Varaha, a battle was fought between Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu to prove their superiority. Lord Shiva manifested before arrogance. After that he also showed them his form in the shape of Shivalinga. Lrom that day onwards the Shivalinga became famous."

Nandikeshwarji narrates the tale of battle between Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu.

"Once while travelling lord Brahma reached the abode of Lord Vishnu. He saw Lord Vishnu. He saw lord Vishnu resting on Shesh-Nag and being attended by Garuda and other attendants. When Brahma saw that Vishnu did not get up to receive him, he became very angry. Very soon, verbal dual erupted between them. It became so severe that a battle was fought between them, which continued for very long time. All the deities arrived from the heaven to watch the battle. They became very worried when they saw no sign of battle coming to an end. They decided to go to lord Shiva, to seek his help.

"Though Lord Shiva knew everything, but still feigning ignorance, he asked about the well beings of the world. The deities told him about the battle, fought between Brahma and Vishnu."

"Lord Shiva then sent his one hundred Ganas to pacify both of them. He too went there accompanied by mother Parvati, boarded on a chariot. When Lord Shiva reached there, he saw that Brahma and Vishnu were

about to use their deadly weapons- Maheshwar and Pashupat respectively. Pearing the destruction, which these deadly weapons might have caused, Lord Shiva manifested himself in the form of 'Analstamba' (pillar of fire) between them. Brahma and Vishnu had already released their weapons- Maheshwar and Pashupat. Both the weapons fell into that pillar of fire and got destroyed.

"Brahma and Vishnu were very surprised to see the pillar of fire, which was so enormous in size that it reached the sky and penetrated down the earth. Vishnu transformed himself into a boar and went to the 'Patal' (nether world) to find the base of that 'Pillar of fire'. But he was unsuccessful in his attempt and came back.

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Similarly Brahma transformed himself into a swan and flew up in the sky to find its limit. While going through the aerial route he met a withered 'Ketaki' flowers, which had still some freshness and fragrance left in it."

"Lord Shiva smiled at the futile attempts of Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu. As a result of his smile the Ketaki flower fell down from the branch. Ketaki flower told Brahma that he had been present there since the beginning of the creation, but was unable to know about the origin of that 'Pillar of fine'. The flower also advised Brahma against making any effort in that direction, as it would be of no use."

"Brahma then sought the help of Ketaki flower to give a false witness before lord Vishnu, that he (Brahma) had been successful in seeing the limit of that pillar of fire. Ketaki flower agreed. Both of them went to Vishnu and Brahma told him that he had seen the limit of that Pillar of fire. Ketaki flower gave a witness. Vishnu accepted the superiority of Brahma."

"Lord Shiva became very angry with Brahma. He proceeded to punish Brahma for his falsehood. Lord Vishnu requested Lord Shiva to spare the life of Brahma. Lord Shiva became pleased with Vishnu and accorded him the same status as that of his own."

Nandikeshwar continuing with the tale said:

"After according same status to Vishnu as that of his own, Lord Shiva opened his third eye from it manifested 'Bhairav'. He ordered Bhairav to kill Brahma. Bhairav severed the fifth head of Lord Brahma with his sword. Brahma became very terrified. He was trembling in fear. Lord Vishnu felt pity on his condition and requested Lord Shiva to forgive him.

Lord Shiva then stopped Bhairav, but told Brahma.

"You spoke untruth with a desire to become worshippable. It is my curse that, you will not be worshipped by anybody. You will posses only four heads."

Brahma begged his forgiveness. Lord Shiva feeling pity on Brahma gave him a boon of being the presiding deity of all the yagya. Similarly the Ketaki flower also prohibited from being used during worship. But when Ketaki flower tendered his apology Shiva gave blessing that it would be fortunate to be offered to lord Vishnu during the worship.

Lord Vishnu and Brahma made salutations to lord Shiva and offered him

a seat. They then worshipped him. This was the first time Brahma and Vishnu had worshipped lord Shiva. Shiva was very pleased. Shivaratri has been continued to be celebrated since that day. This particular day is considered to be the most auspicious day for the worship of Lord Shiva.

A devotee who fasts on Shivaratri remaining only on fruits, attain virtues equivalent to the worship done for the whole year. The idol of Shiva is consecrated on this day.

Lord Shiva has himself told the deities that he had manifested in the form of Pillar of Fire' in the month of Agahan and during the constellation of Ardra. He also said-

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"One who has my darshan on this day (Shivaratri) or worships me in my form of linga is dearer to me than Kartikeya. The place where, I manifested in the form of Pillar of fire will become famous as Lingasthan. Because of its resemblance with the 'Mountain of Fire', it will also be

known Arunachal."

Later on Shiva brought back to life all the people who had died in the battle, fought between Brahma and Vishnu.

Lord Shiva then preached Brahma and Vishnu on the five duties (Panchakritya) saying that 'Srishti' (creation), 'Sthithi' (position), Samhar (annihilation), Tirobhav (concealment) and 'Anugrah' (obligation or kindness) are the five duties by which this world functions.

The source of this world in 'Sarga' or Nature. The establishment of this world is 'Stithi' or position. The tendency of this world to destroy is Samhar or destruction. The feeling of absence of this world is Tirobhav or concealment and Moksha or salvation is obligation or Anugrah.

Lord Shiva then goes on to explain that the first four duties like Sarga (Nature) etc help in the nurturement of the world and the fifth duty Anugrah is a giver of salvation.

Lord Shiva also told them (Brahma and Vishnu) that he (Shiva) had blessed both of them to look after the two duties i.e. Srishti and Sthiti. Rudra and Mahesh have been entrusted with the job of Sanhar and Tiribhav. "The fifth duty 'Anugrah' has been kept by me." Said Shiva.

After describing about the allocation of various duties, Lord Shiva described the meaning of 'OMKAR' to them. He said that OMKAR signified the world and contained the power of Shiva and Shakti. This powerful mantra gives all kinds of worldly accomplishment as well as salvation. After that Lord Shiva initiated Brahma and Vishnu with the OMKAR' mantra and preached them on the importance of the worship of Shivalinga.

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RITUALS OF THE WORSHIP OF SHIVA—SACRED PIGRIMAGES

On the request of the sages, Suta describes about the methods of worshipping Shivalinga. He says— "One should construct a Shivalinga

either of mud, rock or metal and establish it in such a place where it can be worshipped daily without any hindrance."

"The 'Char' (mobile) Linga should be small in size and the Sthira (fixed) linga should be large. The Linga should be constructed along with the pedestal. The rule for constructing a Shivalinga has been specifically described. The breadth of thickness of the Linga should be twelve times the thickness of the devotees (one who is constructing the linga) finger, while the length should be twenty-five times. After establishing the linga in the above mentioned way, it should be worshipped after performing the Shodasopachar. The thumb also symbolise a Shivalinga and its worship can be done. While worshipping the Shivalinga, the mantra OM NAMAH SHIVAY should be continuously chanted. Chanting this mantra for five crore times, helps a man in attaining to the abode of Shiva. Worship of Shiva done during the mid night is considered to be especially fructifying.

There are numerous places of pilgrimages connected with Shiva at the banks of river Ganges and river Indus. River Saraswati is considered to be a sacrosanct river and having an opportunity of living at its banks, helps in attaining to the abode of Brahma.

Similarly, there are famous temples of Lord Shiva at Kashi, Naimisharanya, Badrikasharama and Kedar etc. There are many temples of Shiva at the banks of holy river like Ganges, Yamuna, Saraswati, Godavari, Narmada, Kaveri, Sarayu, Tungabhadra etc. Worshipping Shiva at these places bestows undiminishing virtues and liberates a man from all of his sins.

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CONDUCT OF THE RESPECTIVE CASTES--DHARMA

On the request of the sages, Suta described about the virtuous and invirtuous activities of a man according to the respective castes he

belongs to. He said:

"A brahmin who performs the rituals, as described in the Vedas, only is entitled to be called a Dwija. A brahmin who is not that proficient in the Vedas is called a 'Kshatriya brahmin'. A brahmin engaged in agricultural activities and business is called a Vaishya-brahmin'. A brahmin who is in the habit of condemning and criticizing others, is called a 'Shudra-Brahmin'.

"A Kshatriya who looks after the welfare of his subjects is called a king, while the rest of them are known as simply Kshatriya. A Kshatriya who indulges in business is called a Vaishya Kshatriya. Similarly a Kshatriya who engages himself in the service of the three superior castes -Brahmin Kshatriya and Vaishya is called a Shudra Kshatriya.

Dharma is considered to be of two types- 1) Dharma performed by matter and materials. 2) Dharma performed by indulging in physical activities.

The performance of Yagya etc comes in the first category. Making pilgrimages of holy places comes in the second category. During the Satya Yuga, meditation was the way to attain self knowledge. During Treta Yuga, it was attained by penance, during Dwapar Yuga it was attained by performing 'Yagya' while in the present era of Kali Yuga, idol worship is considered to be the means to achieve self-realization. Invirtuosity invites sorrow while virtuosity bestows joy and happiness.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF AGNI-YAGYA'

The sages then asked Suta about the Agniyagya, Brahma yagya, and Guru Puja in order of importance.

Suta said-

"Performing 'havan' by offering matter and materials into the sacred fire, is called Agni yagya. This ritual is especially meant for the brahmachari (celibates). Performing havana during the evening time brings prosperity, while performance of havana during the morning times gives long life. Making sacrifices to the deities during the daytime is called 'Deva Yagya'. A brahmin should perform 'Brahma yagya with the help of the study of the Vedas."

"First of all lord Shiva adopted an auspicious day for himself and named it Sunday. After that he named the Six remaining days of the week and attributed them to the following deities respectively - Monday (Durga), Tuesday (Skanda), Wednesday (Vishnu), Thursday (Yama), Friday (Brahma), and Saturday (Indra).

Worshipping the deities on their respective days give peace properity and all kinds of accomplishments.

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APPROPRIATE PLACE AND TIME FOR WORSHIPPING SHIVA

In the Vidyeshwar Samhita of Shiva Purana, describing about the importance of place and time for worship of Shiva says-

"Worshipping Shiva at a pure place in a house gives appropriate fruits, while worship done in a cowshed gives virtue, which are ten-times more than the former one. Worshipping Shiva at the banks of a river gives, ten times more virtues than the second one. Worship of Shiva done either in temple, under the basil plant etc. or at the banks of Sapt Ganga, gives ten times more virtue than the third one. If Shiva is worshipped at the seashore than the fourth one, while worshipping Shiva on the peak of a mountain, gives ten times more virtue than the fifth one. But worship done with a fully concentrates mind, gives the best fruits.

During the Satya Yuga performance of Yagya and donations gave complete results. During the Treta Yuga it gave half, while in the present Kali Yuga it gives one-fourth results. Virtuosity performed with a pure heart does not go in vain. The other auspicious days in order of their increasing importance are 'Surya-Sankranti', Tula Sankranti and Mesh-Sankranti, Lunar eclipse and Solar eclipse respectively.

WORSHIPPING THE IDOL OF SHIVA

It has been mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of Viddyeshwar Samhita that all the desires of a man are completely fulfilled, if he worship even in earthen idol of Shiva. For making an idol of Shiva, clay should be acquired from the base of river, pond, well or any such other place. In this clay fragrant powder and milk should be added to make it into a paste. After the constructing of idol is complete, it should be worshipped by all the sixteen types of rituals Shodasopachar.

If the Shivalinga is constructed by somebody else, then three 'sera' of Naivedya should be offered to the deity, whereas if one himself has constructed the Shivalinga then the one-fourth of a 'Sera' should be offered.

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If such an idol s worshipped for one thousand times, then it helps a devotee in attaining to the Satyaloka. Performing 'abhishek' of such an idol helps in self-purification, offering fragrance gives virtues, Naivedya increases the life span and worshipping it with 'Dhoop' gives wealth and

prosperity respectively.

Worshipping the idol with a burning lamp gives knowledge to the devotee, whereas offering beetel leaves gives splendours.

A devotee who worships Lord Shiva in the Hindu month of Magh and on Krishna Chaturdashi achieves longevity of life. Both, worldly pleasures and salvation are achieved by worshipping Shiva.

Worshipping Shiva in the Hindu month of Kartik by going Japa, penance etc gives special fruits and the devotee becomes free from all kinds of diseases.

If a devotee worships lord Shiva on Sunday he becomes free from rebirth.

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THE MAJESTY OF PRANAV PANCHAKSHAR

The root sounds Akar, Ukar, Makar, Bindu and Nad, which are free from the delusions and which originates from the mother nature are called

Pranav. It is of two types:-a)Gross, b) Subtle. (Pranav Mantra OM AND OM NAMAH SHIV AY!

It symbolizess the unified power of Shiva and Shakti and destroyes all the sins of a man. A man desirous of worldly pleasures must chant the mantra 'Hrishva Pranav' containing the three root sounds A, U, and Ma, which symbolizes Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh respectively. On the other hand a man aspiring for the salvation, must chant the mantra 'Deergha Pranav' containing A, U, Ma, Nad and Bindu.

Before commencing the study of Vedas pronouncing OMKAR is a must. By chanting 'Pranav' for nine crore times man becomes pure. By chanting it for further nine crore times a man develops a control over natural forces like wind, smell and earth etc.

This Pranav mantra is considered to be most powerful and helps a man to attain the abode of Shiva.

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WORLDLY BONDAGES AND SALVATION

In the eighteen chapter, all the sages requested Suta to explain the meaning of bondages of life and Salvation

Suta replied-

"Because of the eight types of bondages which a man feels on this earth, the soul is also known as "Jiva". The Jiva becomes liberated only after becoming free from these eight bondages. These eight bondages are - Nature, Intelligence qualitative- ego and the Panchatanmatras i.e. Sound, touch, appearance, taste and smell.

"Each soul is binded by these eight aspects of the Nature. The actions performed as the result of these bondages is called Karma. A man reaps the fruits of his actions- whether good or evil. He either enjoys pleasures or suffers because of sorrow, due to this Karma." The soul takes rebirth in a cyclic was binded by the effects of his Karmas. The eight Chakra' are nothing but the eight forms of the nature. Shiva is beyond the reach of these eight chakras, on the contrary he has full control these eight chakras. So a man can become free from the bondages of this world, only by worshipping Shivalinga. The linga is both gross as well as subtle. There are five types of Linga on this earth.- Swayambhu Linga, Bindu Linga, Pratisthit Linga, Char Linga, Guru Linga. A person desirous of worldly pleasures should worship the cross Shivalinga, where as one who is desirous of attaining salvation must worship the subtle Shivalinga."

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THE WORSHIP OF PARTHIVA LINGA

Suta then explains the greatness of worshipping a Parthiva Linga-:

"Parthiva Linga is the most supreme among all the Shivalingas. All the aspirtions of he deities as well as men are fulfilled by the worship of Parthiv linga. During the era of Satya, jewel was considered to be of prime importance, where as during Treta Yuga and Dwapar Yuga, gold and mercury had the prime importance respectively. In the present era of Kali, a Parthiva Linga holds this place of honor. The worship of Parthiva Linga begets more virtues than even penance. Just as Ganga among the rivers, Kashi among the sacred places of pilgrimages, Omkar among all the mantras are considered to be superior, In the same way Parthivalinga is considered to the supreme among all the Linga. Worshipping, a Parthiva linga with a 'Nishkam bhava' helps a man to attain liberation."

Suta elaborately describes about the methods of doing worship of Parthiva Linga:-

"After becoming fresh in the morning, a man should wear a rudraksha garland in his neck and apply Bhasma (ash) on his forehead. He should then worship the Parthiva Linga. He should chant the various names of Shiva, while worshipping the Parthiva Linga, like Har, Maheshwar, Shambhu, Shoolpani, Mahadeva, etc. After worshipping the Parthiva Linga, it should be immersed in the river, Then the mantra - OM NAMAH SHIVAY should be canted with complete devotion. This is the method which has been described in the Vedas for the worship of Parthiva Linga."

The numbers of Parthiva Linga differ according to one's desires. For example a man who is desirous of learning and knowledge must worship one thousand Parthiva Linga. A man who is desirous of wealth must worship. One thousand five hundred Parthiva Lingas. A man who is desirous of attaining salvation must worship one crore Parthiva Lingas.

Parthiva linga, which is equivalent to the height measured by the four fingers and which has been established on a beautiful pedestal, is considered to be the best. Parthiva Linga which is the half of the above mentioned height is considered to be medium; and still half than the second category is considered to be inferior Parthiva Linga. It is better and advisable to worship a single Parthiva Linga daily, because it is equivalent to the worship of the whole world. Nobody is barred from worshipping Shiva, except the people whose ancestors had been cursed by the sages like Dadhichi, Gautam. Such people should also worship the

eight idols (earth, water, fire, air, sky, sun, moon and the host) alongwith the Parthiva linga. A brahmin should worship Parthiva linga as per the methods described in the vedas. Worship should be done, facing north.

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IMPORTANCE OF NAIVEDYA AND BILVA-LEAVES

Suta then described about the important of Naivedya offered to Lord Shiva.

"A devotee gets liberated from all of his sins merely at the sight of the Naivedya, which have been offered to lord Shiva. He attains great virtues by having the Prasada."

A man must not accept the Prasada if the worship have been done under supervision of a 'Chandala', but some of the Shivalingas like Banlinga, Siddhalinga and Swayambhu Linga are exceptions to this rule. The prasada which has been offered to the Shivalinga and remains lying on it, is prohibited from having, but the prasad which is not touching the Shivalinga should be accepted.

Bilva fruit is considered to be a form of lord Shiva Its greatness has been eulogized even by the deities himself. It is believed that all the places of pilgrimages, dwell in the Bilva-leaf. Lord Shiva is believed to have his abode in the roots of the Bilva tree. A devotee who waters the roots of the Bilva tree attains greater virtues than offering water to the deities of all the places of pilgrimages. Similarly a devotee who worships the roots of the Bilva tree attains to the abode of lord Shiva.

Suta then goes on he explain the greatness of Shiva's name and the importance of Bhasma (ash) and rudraksha beads in his worship. The name of Shiva is as sacred as Ganges. Similarly 'Bhasma' and 'Rudraksha' are as holy as the rivers Yamuna and Saraswati. Therefore a devotee who possesses the name of lord Shiva on his lips, who applies Bhasma on his person and who wears a rudraksha in his neck attain the virtues similar to that of taking a bath in the sangam. In ancient times, a king by the name of Indrayumna got liberated from the bondages of the world, just by chanting the name of Shiva.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BHASMA (ASH) IN SHIVA'S WORSHIP

Bhasma are of two types:-l) Maha Bhasma and 2) Swalpa Bhasma.

'Shrota' (listener), 'Smart; (rites according to the smritis) and Laukik (worldly) are considered to be the Maha Bhasma. There are many types of Swalpa Bhasma.

'Shrota' and 'Smart' are meant only for the brahmins. For the rest of the castes, 'Laukik Bhasma' is appropriate. A brahmin must apply Bhasma, only after initiating it with the mantras. The ashes which remains after burning dry cowdung is called Agneya Bhasma. Applying 'Tripunda' on the forehead with the ashes after the completion of Yagya, is to the Upanishad rituals like Sandhya and Japa should only be performed after applying tripunda on the forehead.

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IMPORTANCE OF RUDRAKSHA

Rudraksha is very dear to lord Shiva and hence all the sins of a man get destroyed if he chants the name of Lord Shiva using a Rudraksha beads.

He also attains salvation after his death. It is believed that the origin of Rudraksha is connected with Shiva penance.

Once while Sadashiv was performing his penance, his eyes opened due to some disturbances. He was so remorseful that tears rolled down from his eyes. These tear-drops are believed to be the origin of the Rudraksha trees.

Rudraksha of specific colours have been prescribed for different castes. For example a Brahmin, a Kshatriya, a Vaishya and a Shudra have been instructed to put on Rudraksha of white colour, red colour, yellow colour and black colour respectively.

A person who wears eleven hundred Rudraksha on his body, he unites with Shiva. Rudrakshas are of various types i.e. Ekmukha Rudraksha (one opening) to rudraksha with fourteen openings. Each type of rudraksha has specific mantra and specific deity connected with it.

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PART TWO RUDRA SAMHITA

SRISHTI-KHAND

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The sages express their desire of knowing about the manifestation of Shiva and Uma, their marriage and their life as a householder and the other aspects of Shiva's divinity

Suta narrated the story of Narada's attachment and lust - how they were ultimately destroyed. He also narrated of Narada's deep desire to know about Shiva.

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VICTORY OF NARADA OVER 'KAMA'

Once upon a time a Narada was performing a penance in the cave of Himalaya mountain. Indra becoming fearful sent Kamadev to obstruct his penance. But Kamadeva was unsuccessful in his attempt as the place where Narada was doing penance was the same place where Lord Shiva did penance. After the completion of his penance, Narada became arrogant that he had defeated Kamadeva. He went to Kailash mountain and narrated about his feat to Lord Shiva. Narada was naive not to realize the fact hat is happened only because of the divine power of Shiva.

Lord Shiva listened to his arrogant statement. He advised Narada not to reveal this secret to anybody. But Narada went to Brahmaloka and boasted about his feet to Lord Brahma.

Lord Brahma listened to his boisterous statements and advised him not to reveal this to anybody. But Narada was not satisfied. He wanted to give the news of his achievement to Lord Vishnu. So, he went to Lord Vishnu's abode and boasted about his feat of defeating Kamdeva.

Lord Vishnu with a desire to subdue his inflated ego, manifested his illusionary power with the blessings of Lord Shiva.

While Narada was returning from Vaikuntha Loka, he saw a beautiful city. This city was ruled by a king named Sheelnidhi. The king had a daughter and her Swayamvar was being organised. Numerous kings had arrived to take part in that Swayamvar. Narada, curiously entered the place were Swayamvar was being held. The king requested Narada to study the lines of the palm of the princess. Narada was infatuated by the princess 1 beauty. He returned back to Lord Vishnu and expressed his desire of marrying that princess. He also requested Vishnu to make him as handsome as himself (Vishnu).

Lord Vishnu made Narada's whole body very beautiful except his face. Which he made like a monkey. Narada being unaware of this happily went back to Swayamvar site. Narada sat among the kings - his face resembling like a monkey Lord Vishnu too was present there. The princess saw Narada, whose face was looking like a monkey. She was amused. Ultimately she put the garland around the neck of Lord Vishnu

and went to Vaikuntha Loka alongwith him.

Some of the Shiva's gana too were present there in the guise of a brahmin. Their names were Marud ganas. When they saw Narada to see the reflection of his face in the water.

When Narada saw his face in the water, he saw that he was looking like a monkey. He became very furious and cursed the Marudganas to be the bom as demons, even though being brahmins by birth.

Furious Narada then went to Lord Vishnu and cursed him- "You too would suffer due to separation from your wife, during your incarnation of Rama and the monkey would come to your help.

Lord Vishnu accepted Narada's curse without any hesitation. He then removed the illusionary powers by which Naradas' mind was influenced. Now Narada regretted his actions. Lord Vishnu told Narada that everything happened because of Shiva's divine illusions.

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When Narada saw his face in the water, he saw that he was looking like a monkey. He became very furious and cursed the Marudganas to be the born as demons, even though being brahmins by birth.

Furious Narada then went to Lord Vishnu and cursed him- "You too would suffer due to separation from your wife, during your incarnation of Rama and the monkey would come to your help.

Lord Vishnu accepted Narada's curse without any hesitation. He then removed the illusionary powers by which Naradas' mind was influenced. Now Narada regretted his actions. Lord Vishnu told Narada that everything happened because of Shiva's divine illusions.

"You did not pay heed to his advice and hence Shiva by his illusions, has taught you a lesson. Shiva is beyond the reach of the three basic qualities -Satva, Rajas and Tamas. Therefore you must worship and contemplate on the name of Shiva. All of your sins will be destroyed.

After preaching Narada, Lord Vishnu vanished from his sight. Narada then descended down to earth and while having darshan of numerous Shivalingas, he saw two of the Marudganas, whom he had cursed. He told both of them that they would take birth from a giantess's womb, but their father would be sages. He also told them that they would become very famous due to their devotion, Narada went to lord Brahma and requested him to tell about the divinity of Shiva.

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BRAHMA PREACHES NARADA ON ORIGIN OF VISHNU AND BRAHMA

On Narada's request Brahma said-

"During the period of MahaPralaya (Final annihilation) nothing exist, except Shiva. The power which Shiva manifested from his own self came to be known as Ambika. This Ambika is understood to be the cause of the whole world as well as the Nature. Lord Shiva then created a Shivaloka, which is known as Kashi. It is the abode of Shiva and Parvati. A man who makes a pilgrimages of Kashi attains salvation.

Lord Shiva, felt the need of somebody, who could look after the creation in his absence, as he wanted to retire along with Ambika at Kashi. The unified energy of Shiva and Ambika, resulted into a radiant physical form of a child. The child asked Shiva about his name and purpose of his being.

Lord Shiva named the child as Vishnu and advised him to do a penance which would help him to attain all kinds of accomplishment. He then offered him the knowledge of Vedas, through his breath. For this reason it has been said-

"YASYA NISHVASITAM VEDAH " Meaning: Whose exhaled air is Veda.

Vishnu followed the instruction of Shiva and did a tremendous penance for twelve years, but still he was not successful in having a darshan of lord Shiva for the second time. He became worried. He heard a heavenly voice, instructing him to do further penance.

Vishnu then recommenced his penance. It continued for many days. By the blessings of Shiva, numerous fountain of streams errupted from his body, which spread in all directions in the form of Brahma. Vishnu was very pleased to see that stream. He went to sleep in that streams due to which he also came to be known as 'Narayan'. One who has his abode in the water. After that, all the five elements manifested from his self. The three qualities- Salva, Rajos and Tamas as well as the ego manifested from his body. Similarly, five Tanmantras (Subtle form of matter), Panchabhuta (Sky water, air, fire and earth) and ultimately five sense organs and five organs of action also manifested from. Altogether twenty-four types of element manifested from the body of Sri Vishnu.

Brahma told Narada-

"While Vishnu was sleeping in the water, a lotus flower manifested from the navel of Vishnu according to the wish of Shiva. On that lotus was

seated with four heads. I did not see anything except that lotus flower. I had a desire to know about my identity. So I entered into the hollow tubular stalk of that lotus flower, but I was not able to find the source. I returned back to the same place. Suddenly I heard a voice which instructed me to do penance. I did a tremendous penance for twelve years with a desire to know about my creator. Being pleased with me, lord Vishnu manifested before me with in his Chaturbhuj form, but I could not identify him, being influenced by the illusionary power of Shiva. I quarreled with him."

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SIVA ENDS BRAHMA - VISHNU DISPUTE AND SHABDA BRAHMA

"I asked him as to who he was. Vishnu replied that he was the fulfiller of all of his desires. But I replied to him that I only was the creator, nurturer

and the supreme soul of this world. Vishnu became angry and said that undoubtedly I (Brahma) was the creator of this world, but he (Vishnu) was the one, who had created me (Brahma) and the whole world. Vishnu also ordered me to take his refuge and promised to protect me. But being an ignorant I did not believe him. A fierce battle was fought between both of us. A Shivalinga manifested between us to end the battle. We requested that Shivalinga to show its real identity. That Shivalinga had destroyed our pride."

We heard a sound OM. We became curious to know the origin of that sound. Vishnu saw a letter 'A' towards the south of that Shivalinga. He also saw the letters 'U' and 'M' center towards the north of the Shivalinga and in its center respectively. He also saw the mantra 'OM', which was dazzling like a Sun. There was no beginning and end to this mantra OM. As we were making efforts to know about its origin, suddenly Shiva appeared in the form of a sage. He gave us the knowledge regarding OM. He also revealed to us that I originated from the letter 'A', Vishnu originated from letter 'U' and Shiva himself originated from letter M. The letter A signifies creation, U Signifies nurturement and M signifies salvation.

The three letters A, V and M also symbolizes the basic causes of creation. A or brahma also symbolizes the semen, U or Vishnu symbolizes the Vagina and the sound of OM is Maheshwar-the combined sound of A, U and M. All the three united from which manifested a golden egg. This golden egg remained submerged in the water for one thousand years. The almighty then cut that egg into two halves, from which appeared heaven and Earth. We also saw the divine beauty of Maheshwar."

Then we saw all the vowels and consonants emanating from the physique of Mahadeva. Vishnu saw the forty eight letters within OMKAR, which in fact were the two following mantras- "TAT PURUSHAY " VIDDYAMAHE MAHADEVAY DHIMAHI, TANNO RUDRAH

PRACHODAYAT." And "TAT SAVITUR VARENYAM BHARGO DEVASYA DHIMAHI DHIYO YONAH PRACHODAYAT."

"After that we also received the Mahamrityunjay mantras like 'OM JOOM SAH", "HRAUM HRIM JOOM SAH" and "TRAYAMBAKAM

YAJAMAHE". After that we received the five lettered mantra "OM NAMAH SHIVAY", the chintamani mantra 'KSHAMYAUM', the Dakshainamurti mantra - "OM NAMO BHAGAVATE DAKSHAINAMURTAYE MAHYAM MEGHAM PRAYACHCHHA SWAHA. At last we received the great mantra TATVAMASI. Vishnu was so enchanted by this mantra that he started chanting this mantra. We then prayed to Shiva-the creator, the nurturer and the destroyer.

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"Shiva became very pleased with both of us. He preached us the contents of Veda. Shiva told Vishnu about the methods by which his (Shiva's) worship could be done. He revealed to us that Vishnu actually had manifested from the left portion of his Shiva's body and myself from the

right portion of his body. He also blessed us that he would manifest his incarnation of Rudra from our body and also that the purpose of this incarnation would be to do annihilation. Lord Shiva revealed to us that his consort Uma, was in fact mother Nature and her power in the incarnation of Saraswati would be my consort. Lakshmi, who would also manifest from the nature would be the consort of Vishnu."

Brahma told Narada:-

"Lord Shiva informed us that my day consists of four thousand eras and similarly my night too consists of four thousand eras. Since a month consists of thirty days and a year consists of twelve months. In this way my age was fixed to be of one hundred years. One day of Vishnu is equivalent to one year of Brahma. Vishnu's age too was fixed to be of one hundred years. The day of Rudra is equivalent to one year of Vishnu and his age also was fixed to be of one hundred years.

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THE METHODS OF WORSHIPPING SHIVA

On the request of the sages, Suta retold the preaching which had been narrated by Brahma to Narada. Describing the method of Shiva worship

he says-

"A devotee should get up early in the morning and contemplate on Shiva, who gives benediction. After that, he should finish his daily routing work and perform rituals like 'Sandhya' and Vandana etc. After that, he should worship Shivalinga according to vedic rites like Panchopachar, Sodashopachar etc. He should also perform 'Abhiseka' with various offerings. At last, the should beg pardon for his sins."

Once, Brahma went to 'Kshirsagar' (the abode of Vishnu) accompanied by the deities and asked lord Vishnu how a man could be liberated from his sorrows. Lord Vishnu told them that this objective could be met by worshipping Shivalinga.

All the deities, then prayed to lord Shiva, who after becoming pleased instructed 'Vishwakarma' to construct a Shivalinga for them. Vishwakarma then made a Shivalinga for Kubera, a Shivalinga of yellow diamond for Dharmaraj, a Shivalinga of dark coloured diamond for Varuna, a Shivalinga of Indraned diamond for Vishnu and a goldden Shivalinga for Brahma. Similarly Vishwadeva was given a Shivalinga made up of silver, the Ashwini Kumars were given Shivalinga made up of bronze, Lakshmi was given a Shivalinga made up of Crystal (Sphatik), Sun-god was given a Shivalinga made of copper and the moon was given a Shivalinga made of pearl.

Brahma has described the following methods for the worship of Shivalinga-

"After performing the rituals like 'Achaman' and Pranayama a devotee should apply a tripunda on his forehead and wear a rudraksha on his body. After the study of Shanti-path and the performance of Devata-Namaskar, he should make a resolution if he has any wish to be fulfilled. Then the worship of Shivalinga should be done, with the help of Mahima-Stavan and offering flowers to the Shivalinga. The purity of the mantras should be maintained while chanting them.

It has been mentioned in the ShivaPurana that making offerings in the form of lotus, Shatapatra, Shankhapushpi, the leaves of wood apple tree, helps a man in attaining wealth and prosperity. For becoming free from

disease, fifty lotus flowers should be offered to the Shivalinga. Mrityunjay-Japa should be chanted for five lac times, for all types of accomplishment. One lakh dhatura-fruits should be offered for long life, worldly-pleasure, as well as for attaining salvation.

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THE ORIGIN OF KAILASH AND VAIKUNTH

Brahma revealed to Narada how the process of creation commenced-

"After Lord Shiva vanished from our sight, I transformed myself into the appearance of a swan and Vishnu transformed his appearance into that of a boar with the purpose of commencing the process of creation. First of all, I created the water. I poured a palmful of water into it and an egg manifested which consisted of all the twenty four elements. This egg was very enormous in size which made me confused. I did penance for twelve years. Vishnu appeared before me. I requested him to bring that egg to consciousness. Vishnu entered into that egg. As a result of this, Kailash mountain, and all the seven worlds came into existence. After that the static living things were created, which symbolized the dark quality (Tamas guna). After that I created four footed animals like cows and Ox etc. inspite of these creations, I was not satisfied, so I again went into meditation.

As a result the deities were created which symbolized the virtuous quality (Satvaguna). Once again I meditated and the human species came into existence, which symbolized the medium quality (Rajas guna). With the permission of Lord Shiva, I then created spirits like ghosts etc. After that I created my five Manasputras- Sanak, Sanadan etc. But they were so ascetic and detached from the world that they showed their disinclination in contributing in the process of creation. This made me angry, tears rolled down from my eyes. With the permission of Vishnu, I did a tremendous penance to have a darshan of lord Shiva.

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THE EMERGENCE OF RUDRAVATAR AND CREATION

Brahma said to Narada-

"When I accomplished my penance, Lord Shiva manifested in his incarnation of Rudra from in between the eyebrows. Half of his body resembled like that of a woman (Ardhanarishwar). I requested him help me in my creational activities. Rudra created his hosts (Rudragana) who resembled like him. I requested him to create the mortals, to which he laughed and said, that he liberated mortals from their sorrow, so how could he fasten them with bondages. Rudra requested me to create the mortals and then he vanished.

Preaching Narada on the essence of Shivatattva, Brahma said-

"With the permission of Shiva, I created the five basic elements from which the matter is made and also all types of arts. I also created the time. Despite all these creations, I was not satisfied. I created Sage Marichi from my eyes, Sage Bhrigu from my heart, Sage Angira from my head, Sage Pulaha from my Vyan Vayu, Sage Pulatsya from my Udan Vaya, Sage Vashishtha from my Saman Vayu, Sage Kratu from my Apan Vayu, Sage Atri from my ear, Daksha Prajapati from my vital air. You (Narada) manifested from my lap. Sage Kardam and Dharma manifested from my Shadow. Then I divided my body into two parts, and from each of the two parts. Manu and Shatarupa manifested respectively. Both of them got married and in this way commenced the conjugal creation. Priyavrata and Uttanpad were the two sons born to them. Shatarupa also gave birth to three daughters whose names were Akuti Devahuti and Prasuti. Sage Ruchi was married to Akuti, Sage Kardam was married to Devahuti and Daksha Prajapati was married to Prasuti. Sage Yagya and Dakshaina were born to sage Ruchi and Akuti."

"Numerous daughters were born to sage Kardam and Devahuti. Similarly twenty-four daughters were born to Daksha and Prasuti. Daksha married thirteen of his dhauthers to Dharma.

The rest of his daughters were married to sages like Pulastya etc. All the three worlds are inhabited by the progenies of these sages. The same Daksha Prajapati had sixty daughters in another Kalpa, who were married to sages like Kashyapa, etc. In this Kalpa, 'Sati was one of his daughters who was married to Lord Shiva. 'Sati' being distressed by the disrespect sown by her father-Daksha, to her husband-Shiva, had given up her life, by jumping into the sacrificial fire. In her next birth she was

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GUNANIDHI - THE BRAHMINS' SON

Narada asked lord Brahma, when did lord Shiva make Kailash as his abode and what was the reason of friendship between Shivaji and Kubera. Brahma narrated the following story- - There used to live a brahmin by the name Yagyadutt in Kampilyanagar, who was proficient in the performance of Somyagya. He had a son named Gunanidhi. Though he was a scholar but at the same time he was irreligious and kept bad company. He used to indulge in evil activities like gambling.

His father - Yagyadutt was unaware of his evil activities. Whenever he asked his wife about Gunanidhi habits and conduct, his wife used to tell lies and praised the conduct of Gunamidhi. Thus Gunamidhi's condition became worst day by days.

Yagyadutt married Gunanidhi with a girl belonging to a well to do family. But his habits had not changed. His mother tried her best to make him understand, but it was of no avail.

One day Yagyadutt saw, a gambler wearing his ring. He asked him about that ring. The gambler told him that his son - Gunanidhu had lost it to him, in the gamble. He also informed him that he had also lost numerous ornaments and other properties in the gamble.

Yagyadutt became very angry. He married with another woman after abandoning his wife and son.

When Gunadhi came to know about his father's second marriage, he moved to another place, cursing his fate. He kept on walking till he became tired. He sat under a tree and started thinking about his further course of action. He heart was full of remorse and he repented for his past actions. As his mind was engrossed in such kind of thoughts. He saw somw villages going towards temple. They were carrying prasad in their hands.

"Since Gunanidhi was hungry, he followed them and after reaching the temple he sat at the main gate of the temple. IN the night, after the accomplishment of the Pujan, the devotees went to sleep. Gunanidhi entered the premise went to sleep. Gunanidhi entered the premise of the temple. The flame of the lamp was gradually becoming dim as the result of which he could not see properly. He tore some pieces of cloth, he was

wearing and made a thick wick and put it in the lamp. Now the light was sufficient to enable him to see whatever had been offered to the deity."

"He carried as much fruits and other eatables as possible and tried to sneak out from the temple. Unfortunately, he dashed against a devotee woke up and chased him shouting thief-thief."

"Hearing his cries all the other devotees woke up and caught Gunanidhi. He was given such a nice thrashing that proved to be fatal and as a result Gunanidhi died."

The Yamadut's arrived to take his soul to yamloka. But right then, the Shivaganas arrived and prevented the Yamadutas from carrying his soul. They informed the Yamdutas that Gunanidhi was entitled for Shivaloka as he had devoutly observed the Shivaratri fast, had listened to the tales of Shiva and lighted up the lamp which was about to go off. The Shivaganas also informed the Yamadutas that, in his next birth Gunamidhi would become the king of Kalinga."

"In this way Gunanidhi attained to Shivaloka. In his next birth he was born as a son of king

GUNANIDHI - THE BRAHMINS' SON

Narada asked lord Brahma, when did lord Shiva make Kailash as his abode and what was the reason of friendship between Shivaji and Kubera. Brahma narrated the following story- - There used to live a brahmin by the name Yagyadutt in Kampilyanagar, who was proficient in the performance of Somyagya. He had a son named Gunanidhi. Though he was a scholar but at the same time he was irreligious and kept bad company. He used to indulge in evil activities like gambling.

His father - Yagyadutt was unaware of his evil activities. Whenever he asked his wife about Gunanidhi habits and conduct, his wife used to tell lies and praised the conduct of Gunamidhi. Thus Gunamidhi's condition became worst day by days.

Yagyadutt married Gunanidhi with a girl belonging to a well to do family. But his habits had not changed. His mother tried her best to make him understand, but it was of no avail.

One day Yagyadutt saw, a gambler wearing his ring. He asked him about that ring. The gambler told him that his son - Gunanidhu had lost it to him, in the gamble. He also informed him that he had also lost numerous ornaments and other properties in the gamble.

Yagyadutt became very angry. He married with another woman after abandoning his wife and son.

When Gunadhi came to know about his father's second marriage, he moved to another place, cursing his fate. He kept on walking till he became tired. He sat under a tree and started thinking about his further course of action. He heart was full of remorse and he repented for his past actions. As his mind was engrossed in such kind of thoughts. He saw somw villages going towards temple. They were carrying prasad in their hands.

"Since Gunanidhi was hungry, he followed them and after reaching the temple he sat at the main gate of the temple. IN the night, after the accomplishment of the Pujan, the devotees went to sleep. Gunanidhi entered the premise went to sleep. Gunanidhi entered the premise of the temple. The flame of the lamp was gradually becoming dim as the result of which he could not see properly. He tore some pieces of cloth, he was wearing and made a thick wick and put it in the lamp. Now the light was sufficient to enable him to see whatever had been offered to the deity."

"He carried as much fruits and other eatables as possible and tried to sneak out from the temple. Unfortunately, he dashed against a devotee woke up and chased him shouting thief-thief."

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Arindam- the king of Kalinga. He was named as Dama." "When he was still young, his fatherArindam dies. So Dama succeeded him as the king of Kalinga. He renovated all the Shiva temple, which came under his jurisdiction and passed a decree which made the worship of lord Shiva

compulsory for all the subjects. By the blessings of lord Shiva, he became the king of Alkapuri and was known as Kubera."

"During the Padma kalpa, Sage Vishrawa was bom to sage Pulastya- the manasputra of lord Brahma. Vishrawa's son - Vishrawan ruled over Alkapuri for a long time. This city was constructed by the deity Vishwakarma. Vishrawan was a great devotee of Lord Shiva." "During the kalpa named Meghawahan, Gunanidhi did a tremendous penance for ten lac years. As a result of this penance his body was reduced to skelton."

"Lord Shiva became very pleased with him and appeared before him, accompanied by his consort Parvati. He told Gunanidhi to ask for any boon, which will be fulfilled." "When Gunanidhi heard Shiva's voice he opened his eyes, but his eyes were dazzled by the sheer radiance of lord Shiva. He requested Shiva to restore the power of sight in his eyes. Shiva blessed him, as a result of which he was now able to see the divine sight of lord Shiva. But he became jealous of Uma, who was present by the side of Shiva. He was wondering as to who was this lady, dearer to Shiva than him. He glanced cruelly towards her. As a result of this his left eye lost the power of sight." "Parvati asked lord Shiva as to why was this sage (Gunanidhi) looking cruelly towards her. Shiva replied- "He is none other than your son. He is looking at you in astonishment as he his bewildered at the feats achieved your penance." "Lord Shiva then blessed Gunanidhi to become the king of the kings. He also assured him that he will always be present in the vicinity of Alkapuri. After being blessed by Shiva, Gunanidhi also made salutations to Parvati.

Parvati said-

"Since you have looked at me angrily your hatred and enemity (Bair) towards me was clearly visible. For this reason you will be known as Kuberas." After blessings, Gunanidhi both Shiva and Parvati to a place called Vaishveshwar. Kailash mountain was situated near Alkanagri.

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SHIVA GOES TO KAILASH

When Rudra - the Ansha of the Almighty Brahma, heard about the tremendous penance, Kubera was doing he started to play his 'damaru'

(drum), the sound of which reached all the three worlds. Rudra then reached the place where Kubera was doing penance."

"Hearing the sound of his damaru, all the deities including Brahma, Vishnu and Sadashia appeared before him."

"When Kubera saw lord Rudra before himself, he offered his seat to him and worshipped him. He also worshipped the other deities. Rudra was so pleased with Kubera that he decided to stay near him. He called Vishwakarma and ordered him to conduct his abode at Kailash mountain, so that he could live in could live in the vicinity of his great devotee Kubera. Kubera constructed a beautiful city as per his instruction. An auspicious moment was chosen and Shiva went to live at Kailash mountain. He was coronated by the deities." Brahma in this way told Narada about Shiva's departure to Kailash mountain.

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SATI KHAND

In the Sati Khand of Rudra-Samhita, Narada enquires lord Brahma about the reason, why lord Shiva married Sati, inspite of being a 'yogi'. He also

requested Brahma to tell, how Sati became the daughter of Daksha Prajapati and in her next birth as Uma the daughter of Himalaya. How did Uma get lord Shiva as her husband?- asked Narada

Lord Brahma narrated the following tale-

"A girl by the name of Sandhya manifested from my being. I was amazed by her heavenly beauty. Right then a divine entity appeared before me, whose beauty could not have been matched even by the deities. He was Kamadeva- the god of love. He influenced me to such an extent that I forgot that Sandhya was my daughter and got infatuated by her."

"When Rudra came to know about my lust for Sandhya, he admonished me and ridiculed about my character. I felt ashamed. But I also became jealous of Rudra. I decided to influence him with the power of infatuation, but I was unsuccessful in my attempts. I remembered lord Vishnu and he tried to make me understand about the futility of my attempts, as according to him (Vishnu), Rudra was beyond the reach of any human emotions."

"But I instructed my son - Daksha to help in the procreation of a girl child from the womb of Ashwinivirini. Thus Sati was bom. Sati later on became famous of Uma and got Rudra as her husband on account of her tremendous penance."

"Though Rudra was free from all kinds of attachment, but still he became so influenced by the desire for procreation that he married with Sati. He enjoyed a blissful married life for a very long time."

"Rudra father in law, Daksha in his arrogance started condemning his son in law -Rudra. Once, Daksha organised a grand yagya ceremony. He gave invitation to everybody except Rudra and Uma. Despite of Rudra's disinclination to allow Sati to go to her father's yagya, She insisted and ultimately she was successful in convincing Rudra, to allow her to go."

"When Sati reached there, she was not given respect by her father Daksha. Not only this, Daksha made fun of Rudra. Feeling dishonored, Sati gave up her life by jumping into the sacrificial fire."

"When Rudra got the news of Sati's death he became extremely furious.

To take revenge, he created Veerbhadra from his locks of hair. Veerbhadra went to Daksha place and destroyed his oblation site. He severed Daksha's head. All the deities became afraid and prayed to Rudra, to have mercy. Rudra then brought back Daksha to life and helped him the accomplished of the still incomplete Yagya. The site where Sati had died later on became famous as Jwalamukhi devi."

"The same Sati in her next birth was born as Parvati to Himalaya. By her tremendous penance she again got lord Shiva as her husband.

After that lord Brahma told Narada about the manifestation of Kama, the god of love.

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MANIFESTATION OF 'KAMA' WHO IS CURSED BY BRAHMA

"When I became infatuated by the divine beauty of Sandhya, my infatuation resulted into the manifestation of my another Manas-putra

named Kamadeva. His beauty and qualities were incomparable. His manifestation not only inflicted me with lust, but also my other Manasputras became filled up with lust. Kamadeva made salutations to me and asked as to what was his name and purpose of being. I gave him the name 'Pushpavan' and instructed him to help in the process of procreation. I also blessed him that nobody would remain unaffected by his influence including myself and Vishnu."

After being named by lord Brahma as 'Pushpavan', Kamadeva was also given various names as Manmath, Kama, Madan etc by sages like Mareech, etc. They also said to him that he would be married to 'Rati' the daughter of Daksha.

Kamadeva himself was infatuated with the beauty of Sandhya. To test the authenticity of Brahma's boon, Kamadeva took out his five arrows and wanted to examine their power. The names of their arrows were Harshan, Rochan, Mohan, Shoshan and Maran.

These arrows had effect on all the people present there including lord Brahma and Sandhya. Getting affected by those arrows, fourty nine types of thoughts emerged in Brahma's mind. Similarly, flaws were clearly visible in Sandhya's behaviour.

Kamdeva became convinced of his powers and capabilities. But Dharma - the manasputra of Brahma was saddened by this event. He prayed to lord Shiva.

When Lord Shiva saw the condition of Brahma, he became amused and made fun of him and his Manasputras. Everybody was ashamed.

Due to his shame, Brahma perspired profusely. From his perspiration were created the Pitraganas. Similarly from the perspiration of Daksha Prajapati was created the most beautiful woman Rati.

Brahma was very angry with Kamadeva because of whom he was ridiculed by Shiva. He cursed him and said- "You would be charred to death by the arrow of Shiva."

Kamadeva became very scarred and said that he was only testing the authenticity of his boon and he had no other evil intention. He also

requested Brahma, not to curse him.

Feeling Pity on him, Brahma consoled him that, although he would definitely get killed by the arrow of Shiva's sight, yet he would regain his physical body as soon as Shiva get's married. Ford Brahma then went to Brahmaloka.

Daksha requested Kamadeva to get married with his daughter Rati. Kamadeva was very pleased at this proposal. Both Kamadeva and Rati got married.

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SANDHYA DOES PENANCE AND GETS BOON FROM SHIVA

Sandhya was very ashamed of herself. For the atonement of her sin she decided to do penance. She went to Chandrabhaga mountain and

commenced her tremendous penance.

Lord Brahma then instructed Vashishtha to go to her in disguise and help in getting her initiated. He went to Chandrabhaga mountain in the guise of a brahmin and gave the mantra - OM NAMAH SHANKARAYA OM to her and also told her the methods of doing worship, then he returned back.

After sage Vashishtha who was disguised as brahmin went away. Sandhaya did penance as per his instructions. After the passing of one Chaturyuga, she had a darshan of lord Shiva.

Shiva being pleased by her devotion asked her to demand anything. Sandhya said-

"Nobody should have lust towards the member of his own clan. There should be no virtuous and chaste woman greater then me in this whole world. Anybody other than my husband who looks at me with evil intentions become an impotent man."

Lord Shiva blessed her by saying- 'Evamastu!'

Lord Shiva then categorised the life-span of a man into four parts - childhood, adolescence, youth and old age. He than told her that it was written in her destiny to die by burning. He also advised her to go and surrender her body in the sacrificial fire of the yagya, performed by Medhatithi. "Before jumping into the sacrificial fire, just remember anybody, whom you want as your husband, and your wish would be fulfilled in your next birth, when you would take birth as a daughter of Daksha Prajapati. Your father Daksha Prajapati would marry his 27 twenty daughter to Moon, but the moon would have affection only towards Rohini and rest of his wives would be neglected by him. For this reason he would be cursed by Daksha. All the deities would take your refuge."

After blessing Sandhya in the way lord Shiva went back to Kailash mountain.

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SANDHYA BORN AS ARUNDHATI AND MARRIES SAGE VASHISHTHA

When lord Shiva went away. Sandhya got up and went to the place where

Medhatithi was performing his yagya. She made a mental resolution to have that brahmin as her husband, who in reality was Vashishtha and then entered into the sacrificial fire. The fire of the yagya burnt her body and carried it ti the solar-system, where it was divided by the sun-god into three parts and established in his chariot. The names of these three parts were Pratah-Sandhya, Madhyanha-Sandhya and Sayam-Sandhya. Sandhya‘s vital force was absorbed by lord Shiva.

When the yagya ended, the sages were surprised to see the presence of a girl, who was radiating like gold in the sacrificial fire. They took out that girl child from that yagya-kunda. The sages then brought up that girl with love and affection. She was named Arundhati.

When she attained the age of five, Brahma Vishnu and Mahesg arrived and married her with Vashishtha. Arundhati enjoyed a happy life and became famous for her chastity.

Brahma told Narada that since the day he was humiliated by Shiva, he had grudges against him and wanted to take revenge. "I wanted to subdue the arrogance of Shiva by proving it to him that even he could be binded by attachment. I asked Daksha and sages like Mareech as to how this feat could be achieved. As a result 'Rati' and 'Kama' manifested. I instructed Kama to influence Shiva by his powers. Kama agreed but requested me to create a suitably divine women for Shiva. Myself and Daksha became worried and during that time we exhaled fragrant air through our nostrils, which resulted into the creation of spring season. The spring season was looking divinely beautiful in her physical form. I handed over her to Kama and thus all the three of them (spring season, Kama and Rati) went to influence lord Shiva who was in his deep state of meditation.

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CREATION OF MARGANAS AND KAMA'S FUTILE ATTEMPTS

Kama tried his best to bring lord Shiva under his influence. All the living creatures were spell bound by his powers except lord Shiva and Ganesha.

Kama returned back to Brahma ad told him about his unsuccessful attempts. Brahma sighed heavily. From his sighes were created the ferocious ganas. These ganas were shouting "aray-maray"(kill-kill). They even tried to attack lord Brahma, Kama then pacified the anger of these ganas. These ganas were named as Mar.

Lord Brahma then sent these ganas to Shiva along with Kama and Rati to give it a second try. Once again their attempts went futile. All of them returned to lord Brahma and expressed their inability in influencing Shiva.

Lord Brahma then remembered Vishnu, who appeared instantaneously. Brahma revealed about his intentions to him. LordVishnu told him that it was foolishness on his part to have enemity towards Shiva. But when lord Brahma kept on insisting, he revealed to him that this could be only achieved by the blessings of Goddess Parvati. Lord Vishnu said-

"If she becomes pleased with you, then she could help you in achieving your goal by taking birth in a human form and having Shiva as her husband. Instruct Daksha to do penance so that Parvati takes birth in his house."

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DURGA BORN AS DAKSHA'S DAUGHTER SATI

After Lord Vishnu went away, Lord Brahma started meditating on the form of goddess Durga. She appeared before him. Lord Brahma said-

"I need your help in binding Shiva with your maya."

Goddess Durga told Brahma that Lord Shiva in his incarnation of Rudra was beyond the reached of any kind of Maya. But when Brahma kept in insisting then goddess Durga agreed to help him in his effort. She said-

"I will take birth as the daughter of Daksha Prajapati and try to please him by my penance."

After assuring Lord Brahma she vanished. Lord Brahma too went to his abode.

With the permission of lord Brahma, Daksha did penance for three thousand years. As a result goddess Jagdamba appeared before him. She blessed him by saying that she would take birth as his daughter and by her tremendous penance would attain Rudra as her husband. But she warned Daksha that if he showed any kind of disrespect to her, she would end her life.

With the permission of lord Brahma, Daksha Prajapati created many thing just by his mental resolution. But finding the absence of any kind of evolution and development in them, he went to Brahma to take his advice.

Brahma instructed him to create by the help of copulation. Daksha Prajapati then married Asikti -the daughter of Panchajan. Ten thousand sons, including Haryasya were born to them, but all of them were directed by Narada to follow the path of salvation.

After that, Daksha married Panchajani from whom were born thousand of son, but all of them followed the path of salvation and were not interested in creation. Narada was instructed in changing their mind.

Daksha Prajapati became very furious with Narada and cursed him to become an eternal wandered. He said-

"You will never remain at a place for long."

When lord Brahma came to know about Daksha Prajapati's anger towards Narada he went to him and cooled him down. Subsequently sixty

daughters were born to Daksha. He married his ten daughters with Dharma, thirteen daughters with Kasyap. Twenty seven daughters with Moon, two daughters with Bhutangiras, two daughters with Krishashva and the remaining six daughters with Garuda. Daksha mediated on the form of Bhagawati, and was instructed by her to do penance. Daksha did a tremendous penance and thus was born Uma to Daksha and Virani. Uma was brought up with great love and affection. Uma used to worship lord Shiva by singing devotional songs in his praise.

DURGA BORN AS DAKSHA'S DAUGHTER SATI

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SATI DOES PENANCE—SHIVA MARRIES SATI

When Sati attained marriageable age, Daksha started worrying. Sati understood the reason behind her father's worried. She went to her

Mother Virani and expressed her desire of marrying lord Shiva.

Her mother made all the arrangements so that Sati could worship Shiva without any problem. Sati commenced her austerity named Nandavrata which continued for a year. Being impressed by her austerities, all the deities descended down from heaven to see her.

All the deities and the sages requested lord Shiva to get married, but Shiva did not want to curtail his freedom by getting married. When the deities insisted he told them to find a suitable match for him.

Brahma and Vishnu told Shiva about the tremendous penance Uma was doing to him (Shiva) as her husband. They also requested him have to go to her (Uma) and fulfill her desire. Lord Shiva agreed.

After Uma had accomplished her penance named Nandavrat, lord Shiva appeared before her and asked her to demand anything. Uma because of her shyness could not say anything. Lord Shiva knew about her desire so he said-

"You will have me as your husband."

Uma's face beamed with joy, but she shyly requested lord Shiva to keep this proposal before Daksha. Shiva agreed and said- 'Tathastu'. He then went back to his abode- Kailash.

Sati narrated the whole story to her parents. Both of them became very happy with this news. Lord Shiva then instructed Brahma to put a formal proposal to Daksha regarding his marriage with Sati. Lord Brahma went and informed Daksha about lord Shiva's proposal. Daksha was very happy at the proposal. Brahma then came back to lord Shiva.

Lord Shiva was anxiously waiting for his arrival. When Lord Brahma arrived he curiously asked about Daksha's response. When lord Brahma told him about Daksha's approval of the marriage. Shiva was very pleased at this.

Lord Shiva proceeded towards Daksha's abode on the auspicious moment of Phalgun, Krishnapaksha and on the thirteenth day of Phalguni Nakshatra. Sitting on the back of Nandi and accompanied by all the

deities including lord Brahma, Vishnu he reached Daksha's residence.

The marriage-procession was received by Daksha with great respect. Shiva narrated Sati in an auspicious lagna. Being pleased, all the deities eulogised Shiva and danced in joy.

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LORD BRAHMA FACES THE WRATH OF SHIVA

Daksha presented invaluable things to his daughter- Sati as dowry. Similarly the brahmins were presented with large quantities of wealth.

Lord Brahma was enchanted by the divine beauty of Sati. With a desire to see her face, he put logs of wood which were wet, into the yagni kunda and poured ghee on them. As a result the atmosphere was filled up with smoke. Now Brahma removed the piece of cloth which covered her face. He became infatuated by her beauty. When lord Shiva discovered about his evil intentions he ran towards him menacingly. Lord Shiva wanted to kill him, but the deities prayed to spare his life. Lord Vishnu eulogised and worshipped him and only then his anger was subdued. Thus lord Brahma was forgiven by Shiva.

Though lord Shiva had forgiven Brahma, yet he instructed him to apologize by bowing down his head. Brahma did as he was instructed Lord Shiva then established on his head. Brahma became ashamed and asked as to how could he atone for his sins. Lord Shiva instructed Brahma that by worshipping him he could appropriately atone for his sins. He than instructed Brahma to go to the earth where he would be worshipped as 'Rudra Shir'. Shiv said-

"Your worship would help the brahmin in accomplishing every kinds of work. Taking lessons from you people would not dare to have extramarital affairs.

After reaching Kailash mountain, lord Shiva instructed all his ganas (attendants), not to disturb them (Shiva and Shakti). When all the ganas went away Shiva and Shakti enjoyed a blissful union for twenty five Deva-years.

When the rainy season arrived, Shakti requested Shiva to make a residence in such a place to that they could not be disturbed by rain etc. Lord Shiva smiled and said-

"Dear Sati! The clouds and rain will not dare to disturb if you are present by my side, no matter whereever we live - even if we live on the peaks of Himalayas.

Sati requested him to make Himalaya as his abode. Lord Shiva agreed and both if them shifted to their new abode at Himalaya, where they lived for ten thousand 'Deva-years'.

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IMPORTANCE OF DEVOTION IN KALI YUGA

Sati requested lord Shiva to enlighten her mind by giving discourses. Shiva revealed to her the importance of devotion in the Kali Yuga. He said

that the value of knowledge (jnana) and asceticism (vairagya) would diminish to the extent of extinction in the era of Kali and only devotion would help a man in attaining liberation. Lord Shiva said-

"I had burnt the time (Kala) for the benefit of the devotees, with my third eye. For the sake of my devotees, I even abandoned Ravana without any partiality. For the welfare of my devotees, I even instructed Nandi to punish sages Vyasa, who was exiled out of Kashi."

Shiva preached on many topics like types of devotion, yantra, mantra, scriptures etc.

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SATI'S DOUBT ABOUT SRI RAMA

Devarshi Narada who was listening to the divine tales of Shiva, narrated by lord Brahma with rapt attention, requested him to describe about

other characteristics of Shiva. Brahma said-

"Once, lord Shiva accompanies by Sati, arrived at Dandak aranya, where Sri Rama was wandering in search of Sita, who had been abducted by Ravana. After walking for some time Lord Shiva saw Sri Rama and Lakshman. Lord Shiva made salutations to Sri Rama. Sati was surprised at Shiva's behaviours. She asked lord Shiva about the reason he made salutations to Sri Rama. Shiva told Sati that he (Sri Rama) was his deity and an incarnation of lord Vishnu. But Sati was not satisfied by this reply. She wanted to test, whether Sri Rama was really an incarnation of lord Vishnu or not. She disguised herself as Sita and went to Sri Rama. But Sri Rama recognised her real identity and addressed her as Mother. Sati was ashamed but asked Sri Rama as to why did Shiva made salutations to her."

Sri Rama narrated the following story-

Once, lord Shiva requested Vishwakarma to construct a grand palace and a magnificent throne for him. When everything was ready, Shiva invited all the deities for the crowning ceremony of lord Vishnu.

Lord Vishnu was requested to be seated on the throne and was worshipped by all the deities including Shiva himself. He assured lord Vishnu that all of his (Vishnu's) incarnations would be shown respected by his (Shiva's) devotees. Rama was the incarnation of Vishnu."

Sati was now completely satisfied. She was also ashamed of herself that she had doubted Shiva's words. She went to lord Shiva.

Lord Shiva stopped looking at Sati, as her consort, because she had personified herself as mother Sita. This fact was even corroborated by a heavenly voice. Now Sati's heart was filled up with sorrows.

She followed disenchanted Shiva to the Kailash mountain, where he commenced his meditation and went into Samadhi. She sat down without saying a word. When lord Shiva came out from his Samadhi, he saw her stire sitting their. He felt pity on her and drove away her guilt and sorrows, by giving discourses.

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DAKSHA'S ANIMOSITY TOWARDS SHIVA— PERFORMS YAGYA

Once, the sages organised a yagya at Prayaga, which was attended by all the deities. Lord Shiva too had come, accompanies by Sati. He was

eulogized and worshipped by all the deities and the sages.

Daksha arrived there and after making salutations to lord Brahma sat down without showing any kind of respect to Shiva. After that, all the deities and the sages came and made salutations to Daksha, but Shiva sat where he was sitting.

The ignorant Daksha cursed Shiva that from now onwards his (Shiva's) share would not be kept in the yagya.

At this Nandi- the vehicle of Shiva became very angry and cursed Daksha that from today onwards the brahmins would fail to understand the essence of Vedas.

Lord Shiva then pacified Nandi's anger and both of them went back to their abode. Daksha too went back to his place and started having hatred towards Shiva.

Daksha organised a yagya at 'Kanakhal' in which everybody except Shiva and Sati were invited. Sage Dadhichi arrived and not finding the seat for Shiva went back, saying that it was impossible to accomplish a yagya without Shiva.

Then Daksha commenced the yagya with the assistance of other sages who were present there.

When Sati saw all the deities going happily, she became curious to know where they were going. She requested her companion to ask the moon as to where he was going in such a cheerful mood.

The moon told her companion that they were going to attend the yagya ceremony, being organised by Daksha.

Sati was very surprised at this information. She went to lord Shiva and sought his permission to go there. Lord Shiva then told Sati that her father did not invite them because of the animosity he was having towards him (Shiva).

Sati became very furious and decided to go there to know about the reason why Daksha was performing the yagya without inviting her

husband-Shiva. Shiva sent Nandi and other rudraganas as her escorts.

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SATI'S DISHONOR—GIVES UP LIFE

When Sati reached, where Daksha was performing his yagya, she met her mother and sisters. They met her with all the respect and honor. But Daksha did not even caste a glance at her. Imitating him many other people did the same.

But Sati not bothering about the disrespect shown to her made salutations to both her parents. When she reached near the yagya-mandap she saw that shares of all the deities was there except that of Shiva. She became furious and asked her father as to why was Shiva not invited to the yagya.

Daksha then made fun of Shiva and cursed him. This made her more angry and she declared that she would give up her life in everybody's presence. After the declaration her mind was engrossed by the thoughts of Shiva.

Sati then sat in padmasan and closed her yes. By her yogic powers she united with Shiva and her lifeless body fell into the yagya-kunda. This incident shocked everybody and the rudraganas furiously picked up their weapons. Right then a heavenly voice was heard.

"O mean Daksha! Share on you! You are a sinner and a fool. Now you are certain to face the wrath of Shiva. Because of your act, the deities too will have to suffer."

Daksha became scarred. He immediately eulogising lord Vishnu.

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VEERBHARDA CUTS OFF DAKSHA'S HEAD

When Nandi informed Shiva about Sati's death, he became very furious. He angrily pulled out a lock of hair and dashed it against the mountain,

which got divided into two parts. From one part manifested the valiant Veerbharda and from the other part Mahakali.

Veerbhadra and Mahakali were instructed by Shiva to destroy the yagya of Daksha and to kill all the people who were present during the time of Sati's death, including the deities and the sages.

After getting the instructions from lord Shiva, Veerbhardra marched with a huge army which included the mighty Shivaganas like Dakini, Bhairav and Kapalish etc. Goddess Kali to joined him with her army which consisted of all her nine incarnations like Katyayani etc. As the army marched on numerous auspicious signs were visible.

On the other hand Daksha experienced many inauspicious signs. His left eye, left army and left thigh started throbbing. He saw the vultures flying over his head. He heard the sounds of jackals howling.

Daksha then prayed to lord Vishnu to rescue him from the imminent wrath of lord Shiva. Lord Vishnu preached Daksha and said-

"Daksha! Since you have committed the greatest sin by dishonoring Shiva and Sati. Even I can not prevent the calamities which you are certain to face."

As lord Vishnu was preaching Daksha suddenly there was a loud commotion. The army of Veerbhadra had arrived. Daksha was frightened and again prayed to Vishnu to save his life.

Lord Vishnu again expressed his helplessness and told him that because of him all the deities too would have to suffer.

A terrible battle was fought between the armies of Veerbhadra and the deities. The deities got defeated and fled away. They went to lord Vishnu and sought his help. Lord Vishnu decided to fight on the side of the deities.

The battle recommenced for the second time. Lord Vishnu having a dual fight with Veerbhadra and the deities were fighting against his army.

Suddenly everybody heard a heavenly voice which said that Veerbhadra

was invincible. Hearing this, Lord Vishnu and Brahma went to their respective abodes.

Daksha ran for his life and hid himself behind the attar where the yagya was being performed. But Veerbhadra pulled him out from there and severed his head. He then threw his head in the agni-kunda. After this he returned back to Kailash accompanies by his army.

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KSHUVA-DADHICHI FIGHT AND VISHNU-DADHICHI FIGHT

Narada, who was listening to the divine tales of Shiva with rapt attention, was very curious to know about the reasons why lord Vishnu attended a

yagya where Shiva was not invited and why did he fight a battle against Veerbhadra despite knowing about his invincibility.

Lord Brahma told him that all this happened due to the curse of Sage Dadhichi-

In the ancient times, there used to live a king named Kshuva, who was a great friend of Sage Dadhichi. Due to some reasons both of their developed animosity towards each other. Dadhichi considered himself superior because of being a brahmin, on the other hand Kshuva considered himself superior on account of his wealth. The dispute took a worst turn and Dadhichi punched him on his head. As a result Kshuva felt down unconscious. When he regained his consciousness he struck sage Dadhichi with his weapon named Vajra, which injured Dadhichi.

Dadhichi sought the help of Shukracharya. Shukracharya healed his wounds by his mantras. He also taught Dadhichi the mahamrityunjay mantra. Dadhichi then did a tremendous penance to please lord Shiva. Lord Shiva appeared before him and blessed him with three boons, they were 1) his bones, would become as hard as lightning (Vajra), 2) he would not be killed, 3) he would never be humiliated.

Armed with these three boons, Sage Dadhichi again went to fight Kshuva. He kicked him, in return Kshuva too attacked him with his weapon named Vajra, but it did not have any effect on Dadhichi as his bones had become as hard as lighting.

King Kshuva did a tremendous penance to please lord Vishnu. Vishnu revealed to him that Dadhichi had become immortal because of the blessings of lord Shiva, but assured him that he would certainly help him in defeating Dadhichi.

Lord Vishnu then visited the hermitage of Sage Dadhichi, disguised as a brahmin. On being asked by Dadhichi about the purpose of his arrival, he said that he had come with a desire of a boon on his heart.

Sage Dadhichi, by his yogic power came to know about the real identity of a 'Brahmin'. He told that he had been caught. Lord Vishnu was ashamed.

Lord Vishnu then went back to Kshuva and instructed him to go to sage

Dadhichi and act as if he had accepted his superiority.

"Kshuva went to sage Dadhichi and did as he was instructed to do, but Dadhichi did not believe his words. Now lord Vishnu became angry and tried to kill him by his sudarshan chakra, but he was not successful, as the chakra, which was given to him by lord Shiva himself, was not willing to harm a devotee of Shiva.

"Lord Vishnu then tried to kill Dadhichi by shooting volley of arrows. The deities too attacked with their weapon. Sage Dadhichi threw a handful of Kusha grass, initiated with mantras towards them, which destroyed all the weapons of the deities."

KSHUVA–DADHICHI FIGHT AND VISHNU–DADHICHI FIGHT

Narada, who was listening to the divine tales of Shiva with rapt attention, was very curious to know about the reasons why lord Vishnu attended a yagya where Shiva was not invited and why did he fight a battle against Veerbhadra despite knowing about his invincibility.

Lord Brahma told him that all this happened due to the curse of Sage Dadhichi-

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"In the meantime lord Brahma arrived on the scene accompanies by Kshuva. He told the deities that it was futile to fight with Dadhichi as he was invincible, due to the boon given by lord Shiva."

"Ultimately King Kshuva begged his forgiveness for his offence. Dahichi forgave him but cursed Vishnu including all the deities that they would be burnt to ashes by the wrath of Rudra." "This was the reason why all the deities and lord Vishnu attended the yagya, organised by Daksha and got defeated by Veerbhadra."

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DAKSHA REVIVED AND YAGYA COMPLETED

The deities after being defeated by Veerdbharda went to Brahmaloka and narrated everything about the destruction of Daksha's yagya and also how

his head was severed by Veerbharda.

Brahma became very sad. To bring Daksha back to life and to accomplish the still unfinished yagya, he went to lord Vishnu to take his help. All the deities accompanied him. Lord Vishnu told them that it was wrong on the part of Daksha to have shown disrespect to Shiva. The deities were wrong to support him. Lord Vishnu then went to Kailash mountain, accompanied by Lord Brahma and all the other deities. All of them eulogized and worshipped Shiva. They also requested him to bring Daksha back to life.

Lord Shiva became very pleased and agreed to make Daksha alive. All of them went to Kanakhal where Daksha had organised the yagya ceremony. Veerbhadra accompanied them. When they reached the site. Lord Shiva could not hold his laughter after seeing the destruction of the site. Anyway, he joined the head of a goat to the torso of Daksha's body and made him alive. He also compensated for all the losses which had been caused by the destruction. All the deities became very pleased and they eulogised Shiva.

Becoming pleased by the invocation and eulogy of the deities, Lord Shiva preached Daksha in the following way-

"The person who has the right knowledge (jnani) is the supreme among all human beings. An action which is performed in one's ignorance and jealousy does not liberate a man from his world bondages.

O Daksha then accomplished his yagya singing the praise of lord Shiva. He also give lots of donation to the brahmins. They everybody returned to their respective houses being fully satisfied.

Sati, the daughter of Daksha was reborn as Gauri, the daughter of Himalaya and Maina. By her tremendous penance she again had lord Shiva as her husband.

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PARVAT KHAND

HIMALAYA MARRIED MAIN A

Narada requests lord Brahma to shed light on the birth of Maina and also too she was married with Himalaya.

Brahma said-

"After relinquishing her body, Sati, the daughter of Daksha attained to the abode of Shiva. In her next birth she was bom to Maina, the wife of Himalaya and was known as Parvati. Maina had done great service to Sati in her previous life considering as her own daughter. For this reason she was blessed and got Parvati as her daughter. Parvati did tremendous penance and got lord Shiva as her husband."

Continuing with his story Brahma said-

"Once Himalaya, the king of the mountains, decided to marry with the desire of expanding his lineage. The deities came to know about his desires and so they went to the Pitras and requested them to give their daughter - Maina, so that Himalaya could marry her. The Pitras agreed at this proposal. Thus Maina got married wih Himalaya. After the marriage ceremony the deities returned back to their respective abodes.

Daksha had sixty daughters, 'Swadha' was one of them and was married to the Pitras. In due course of time three daughters were bom to them - Maina, Dhanya and Kalawati. Once all the three of them went to Swetadweepa to have a darshan of lord Vishnu. Right then, sages like Sanak, Sanadan etc arrived there. Everybody present there stood up in reverence, but Maina, Dhanya and Kalawati could not identify who they were and hence they remained sitting. Not only that, they did not even make any salutations to them.

The sages became angry and cursed them to be born as humans in their next birth. Maina, Dhanya and Kalawati became very afraid and requested to be pardoned.

Sages Sanak feeling pity on them told that Maina would become the wife of Himalaya, in her next birth and give birth to Parvati, Similarly Dhanya would be married to king Janaka and Sita would be bom to them, similarly Kalawati would be married to Vrishbhan and Radha would be bom to them. Sage Sanak also told them, that in this way all three of them would attain to the heaven.

Brahma told Narada that after getting married with Maina, Himalaya enjoyed a happy married life for a long time.

Once, lord Vishnu paid a visit to his place, accompanied by all the deities. Himalaya was very pleased by his arrival. After making salutations, he asked for the purpose of their visit.

The deities revealed to them that very soon the incarnation of Sati - Parvati is going to take birth.

"Therefore, O Himalaya! Be prepared for that glorious occasion." Said the deities.

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Himalaya was very pleased at this news. The deities started invocating Uma.

Being pleased by the invocation made by the deities Goddess Uma

assured the deities about her arrival in this world. She told that her incarnation would take place in the house of Himalaya and by the virtues of her tremendous penance she would get lord Shiva as her husband. She also told the deities that she was

satisfied by the service of Maina, done to her in the previous life. After being assured the deities went back satisfied.

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BIRTH OF PARVATI

Himalaya and Maina commenced their penance with the objective of getting Uma as their daughter. Maina did a tremendous penance which

lasted for twenty-seven years.

Goddess Uma became very pleased by her penance. She appeared before her and asked her to demand anything she wished for. Maina expressed her desire of having one hundred valiant sons and a daughter, who would be worshipped by the people in all the three worlds.

Goddess Uma blessed her by saying Tathastu. Maina narrated this incident to her husband Himalaya. He became very pleased. In due course of time one hundred sons were bom t o Maina. One of the sons was Mainak who possessed supreme qualities. Due to some reasons, Indra had severed the wings of Mainak's ninety-nine brothers, but by taking the refuge of ocean Mainak was able to survive the assault of Indra's Vajra.

Himalaya and Maina engaged themselves in the worship of Shiva and Shakti, day and night. After some days Parvati manifested herself by taking birth. After her birth the whole mountaneous region of Himalaya became illuminated by her radiance.

After taking her birth, Parvati gradually started growing up. Varioua names given to her like Girja, Uma, and Jagdamba. Himalaya and Maina felt proud of their fate, which had made them the parents of an incarnation. Seeing the childhood plays of Uma, their hearts knew no bounds.

One day sage Narada arrived there Himalaya requested him to study the palm of Parvati, as he was curious to know about her future. After studying the lines of the palm, Narada predicted that Parvati was destined to be the wife of an entity, who would be beyond the reach of all the three qualities. He also revealed to them, that her husband would be devoid of any flaws and would be self born-Rudra.

Narada told Himalaya that to have Rudra as her husband, Parvati will have to accomplish great austerities and penance. Narada then went away.

When Uma had attained the marriagable age, Maina requested her husband a suitable bridegroom for her. Himalya told her that the words of Narada would never go in vain hence Uma should be asked to do

penance, so that she could have Rudra as her husband.

But Maina was disinclined in forcing her tender daughter - Parvati in to such hardhsips like penance. Parvati then told Maina about her dream, in which she had seen a brahmin instructing her to do penance in order to have Rudra as her husband.

Maina told Himalaya about Parvati's dream. Himalaya then revealed to Maina about his own dream, in which he had seen lord Shiva doing penance at Kailash mountain. He had tried to give Parvati to him (Shiva) was unwillingly to have her service. But Shiva ultimately changed his mind after being satisfied by Parvati's replies.

Himalaya said- "I saw in my dream that Parvati had pleased Shiva by her tremendous penance and ultimately both of them got married. Maina was satisfied and waited eagerly for that auspicious moment.

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THE BIRTH OF 'BHAUM'- MARS

Once, when the ganas of Shiva praised the glory of mother Sati, lord Shiva became overjoyed just like an ordinary human being. In his joy, he

travelled all around the three world without any clothes on his body. He returned back to Kailash and went into meditation.

While he was engrossed in his Samadhi, three drops of perspiration originated from his forehead fell down on the earth. From those drops manifested a very beautiful infant, who was of reddish complexion and who had four arms.

Seeing the child lord Shiva became concerned about his upbringing. Right then, mother earth manifested and lord Shiva entrusted the job of child's upbringing. The child was brought up by mother earth with great love and care. The child was named 'Bhaum' as he was nurtured and brought up by 'Bhumi' (earth).

When the child grew up, he went to Kashi and did a tremendous penance to please lord Shiva Lord Shiva became pleased with him and blessed him by granting him 'Mangalloka', which was superior even to the 'Shukraloka'. The same 'Bhauma' is established in the solar system by the name of 'Mars.'

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SHIVA ARRIVES AT HIMALAYA AND CONVERSATION WITH PARVATI

One day lord Shiva accompanied by his ganas like Bhringi, Nandi, etc,

arrived at Himalaya, with the purpose of doing penance. When Parvati father Himalaya came to know about his arrival, he went to receive him. After he had made his salutations to Shiva, he was instructed by Shiva to see that he is not disturbed while doing his penance.

Himalaya made all the necessary arrangements so that Lord Shiva could perform his penance without being disturbed. One day Himalaya arrived at the place where lord Shiva was doing his penance. Parvati too came along with him. Himalaya requested him to keep Parvati, so that she could be at his service. Lord Shiva declined to keep her with him, fearing her presence might cause hindrance in the path of his penance. Now, Himalaya became very concerned about his daughter's future and wandered whether Parvati would remain unmarried.

When Parvati saw her father becoming worried by Shiva's response she decided to intervene. She said to lord Shiva-

"I am 'Prakriti' (Nature) and you are the 'Purusha' (almighty). You exist in the 'Sagun' form (with form) because of me. In my absence, you will find it impossible even to exist."

Lord Shiva was impressed by her knowledge. He allowed her to be present near her. Himalaya and Parvati became very pleased.

Parvati used to come daily at the place where lord Shiva was doing his penance. Her companions too used to come along. She used to engaged herself in the worship of lord Shiva with great devotion.

Though lord Shiva was very much impressed by her devotion, but he decided that he won't marry her until she has proved her mettle by her tremendous penance.

The deities were tormented by a demon named. Tarakasur. They went to lord Brahma to seek his help. Lord Brahma sends 'Kamadeva' to disturb the Samadhi of Shiva, so that being influenced by him Shiva married Parvati and ultimately kills Tarakasur.

This attempt of Brahma was unsuccessful. Shiva 'burnt' Kamadeva with the help of his third eye. Parvati, then redoubled her effort to attract the attention of Shiva by engaging herself in a tremendous penance.

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THE BIRTH OF VAJRANG

Narada was curious to know about Tarakasur. He asked Brahma to narrate his tale.

Brahma said-

"Kashyapa-the son of Marichi, had thirteen wives Diti was the eldest among them. She was the mother of Hiranyakashipu and Hiranyaksha. Both her sons were killed by lord Vishnu in his incarnations of Nrisimha and Varaha respectively. Diti became very sad by the death of her sons.

After somtime she again became pregnant but the foetus was destroyed by Indra's weapon- Vajra in the womb itself. However Indra was not able to destroy the foetus completely, but was only successful in dividing the foetus into forty-nine parts. These forty-nine parts, later on became famous as 'Maraudganas'.

Again Diti gave birth of Vajrang, who was very valiant and brave. When he grew up, Diti ordered him to defeat the deities. With his mother's permission and blessings, Vajrang defeated the deities and held them captive. He fastened all the deities. With strings and himself became the king of heaven.

Seeing the pitable state of the deities I (Brahma) went to Vajrang accompanied by Kashyapa and requested him to free the deities. Vajrang agreed to free them but said he did not have any aspiration of becoming the king of heaven, he only wanted to teach a lesson to Indra.

Vajrang returned the heaven to the deities. Later on the married Varanji who had been created by me (Brahma). While Vajrang was of virtuous nature, Varangi was met."

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BIRTH OF TARAKASUR AND HIS PENANCE

Varangi gave birth to Tarakasur, the valiant and brave demon. During the time of his birth, the world was affected by inauspicious events like

earthquakes, cyclones etc. His name Tarakasur was given by Kashyapa.

After he grew up, Tarakasur went to Madhuvan to do penance. His tremendous penance scarred the deities. Becoming pleased by his penance, lord Brahma appeared before him and asked him to demand anything.

Tarakasur demanded two boons - there should be no man as powerful as him and except Shiva's son nobody should be able to kill him. Lord Brahma blessed him by saying 'Tathastu'.

After receiving the boons, Tarakasur returned back to Ronitpur and was crowned as the king by Shukracharya. He then defeated the deities and drove them out from the heaven. Now it came under the rule of the demons.

After being driven away from the heaven, the deities went to lord Brahma to seek his help. They asked him as to how they could get rid of this menace called Tarakasur.

Brahma revealed to the deities that Tarakasur could be killed only by such a person, whose parents are Shiva and Parvati. He also advised them to make efforts, so that Shiva agrees to marry Parvati.

Lord Brahma them went to 'Tarakasur' who had now become the king of heaven, and tried to convince him to return it back to the deities. Tarakasur agreed to relinquish the heaven and give it back to the deities. The deities went back to the heaven.

BIRTH OF TARAKASUR AND HIS PENANCE

Varangi gave birth to Tarakasur, the valiant and brave demon. During the time of his birth, the world was affected by inauspicious events like earthquakes, cyclones etc. His name Tarakasur was given by Kashyapa.

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KAMADEVA REDUCED TO ASHES BY SHIVA

Lord Brahma told Narada that the deities decided to send Kamadeva to influence lord Shiva so that the marriage between him and Parvati is

felicitated.

Indra called Kamadeva and told him that the demon king Tarakasur could be killed only by such a person who was the son of Shiva and Parvati. Indra instructed Kamadeva to arouse passion in lord Shiva, so that he agrees to marry Parvati.

Kamadeva, accompanied by his wife Rati went to lord Shiva to accomplish his mission.

After reaching the place where lord Shiva was engrossed in his meditation, Kamadeva made repeated attempts to arouse passion in the heart of lord Shiva, but his actions were no avail.

Right then, Kamadeva saw Parvati arriving accompanied by her companions. She was looking divine in her beauty. Just at that moment lord Shiva too had come out of his meditational trance. Kamadeva thought that it was the most appropriate moment to have a go.

Kamadeva struck lord Shiva with his 'Kamabana' which did have a deep impact on him. Lord Shiva was struck by the awesome beauty of Parvati and his heart became full of passion for her. But at the same time he was surprised at the sudden change in his behaviour. He realized that it was an act of Kamadeva.

Lord Shiva looked all around him. He saw Kamadeva standing towards his left side, with a bow and arrows in his hands. Now he was fully convinceed that it was indeed an act of Kamadeva.

Kamadeva became terrified, he started remembering god, but before the deities could come at his rescue the third eye of lord Shiva got opened and Kamadeva was reduced to ashes.

Parvati got scarred after seeing Lord Shiva in such a destructive anger. She went to her house along with her companions. Rati- the wife of Kamadeva wept unconsolably.

The deities arrived and consoled her by saying that by the grace of lord Shiva, her husband would be alive once again. After that the deities went near lord Shiva and did his worship. They told him that it was not the

fault of Kamadeva, as he had acted in accordance with the aspirations of the deities. They also told him the mystery of Tarakasur's death. The deities then requested him to make Kamadeva alive once again.

Lord Shiva told the deities that Kamadeva would take birth as the son of Krishna and Rukmini in the era of dwapar. A demon by the name of Shambar would throw him off in the sea. He would kill that demon and marry Rati, who too would be living in a city near the sea.

But the deities were not satisfied. They requested lord Shiva to help Rati to unite with her husband. Lord Shiva then told them that Kamadeva would become his gana, but he also warned them against revealing this fact to anybody. Rati then went to the city where the demon Shambar was expected to appear in the era of dwapar. The deities too went back to the heaven.

Lord Shiva's anger did not subside after the death of Kamadeva and the whole world started to feel the wrath of lord Shiva's fury. All the living creatures became terrified. They went to lord Brahma and prayed to him, to save them from Shiva's wrath.

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Lord Brahma went to lord Shiva and conveyed their request to him. Lord Shiva agreed to relinquish his anger. Lord Brahma then carried Shiva's 'fury' to the sea and went to the sea. He requested the sea to posses it until the final annihilation. The sea agreed to do this. This way Lord

Shiva's fury entered into the sea and all the living creatures felt a sign of relief.

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NARADA PREACHES PARVATI DOES PENANCE

When Parvati reached her home, she became very sad as she was unable to bear the sorrow of Shiva's separation. Sage Narada arrived there. Her father Himalaya narrated the whole story to him

Sage Narada then gave the five lettered mantra - "OM NAMAH SHIVAY' to her and he also instructed her to do penance. Parvati heart was filled up with new enthusiasm.

After taking the permission of her parents and relinquishing all of her ornaments and royal apparels, Parvati went to the same place where Lord Shiva himself had done penance. This sacred place was situated at the Himalayas, from where the holy Ganges originated. Parvati companions too had accompanied her.

Parvati commenced her penance which gradually became severer day by day. She did penance for three thousand years by chanting the five lettered mantra- OM NAMAH SHIVAY and performing other kinds of austerities. Becoming impressed by her tremendous penance even the deities flocked to see her. Parvati did her penance, surrounded by fire on all her sides during summer. In rainy season she did her penance without any shelter and during winter she used to do penance by immersing herself in neck deep water.

Parvati's power created such heat in the atmosphere that the whole world started to bum. All the deities and sages went to lord Brahma and told him about the effects, Parvati's penance was having on all the three worlds.

Lord Brahma accompanied by all of them went to Vishnu. They visited the place where Parvati was doing her penance. They realized that lord Shiva was the only remedy and hence all of them went to lord Shiva and made salutations to him.

Lord Shiva enquired about the purpose of their arrival. Lord Vishnu then revealed to him that how distressed and tormented were the deities by the activities of the demon - Tarakasur.

He also told Shiva that he could be killed by such a person, who is born out of the parentage of Shiva and Parvati. Lord Vishnu then told Shiva about Parvati's penance.

Initially lord Shiva refused to comply with their request but when the deities continued with their insistence, he ultimately gave his conscent. The deities became very pleased.

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PARVATI'S LOVE FOR SHIVA TESTED BY SAPTARISHIS AND SHIVA

After the deities went back, lord Shiva summoned the Saptarishis (Vashishtha etc) and instructed them to test Parvati's love for him. The Saptarishis went to Parvati and tested her resolve to marry lord Shiva. They tried to deter her by all means, but Parvati was firm in her resolve. They went back to lord Shiva and narrated the whole story.

Lord Shiva then himself went to Parvati in the guise of a brahmin. Parvati on seeing a brahmin welcomed her with full honor.

Shiva asked Parvati as to why was she doing penance. Parvati told him that she wanted to have Shiva as her husband. Lord Shiva, who was in the guise of a brahmin started cursing Shiva to see how Parvati reacted to it.

Parvati replied that inspite of her penance Shiva did not appear, so she has decided to give up her life in burning pyre. After saying like this Parvati requested the Brahmin to go back and she herself entered into the burning pyre but remained unharmed Lord Shiva was very pleased to see her firm resolve and devotion. He again asked her as to what was the purpose behind doing such a tremendous penance.

Parvati told the brahmin; who in reality was Shiva himself that, she wanted to have Shiva as her husband at any cost. She said-

"You say that lord Shiva does not possess anything - not even wealth. He does not put on clothes on his body. You also say that he is not fit to be a bridegroom of me. But all of your utterances prove your mean intelligence."

Parvati continuing with her statements said that Shiva was the most capable deity in all the three worlds. "There is no sin greater than condemning Shiva." said Parvati.

As Shiva, who was in the guise of Brahmin was about to say something Parvati said to one of her companions-

"This condemner should be killed, if this is not possible then we must leave this place at once."

As she was about to leave that place, lord Shiva revealed his true identity and by holding her hand said- "You have been my wife since time immemorial where are you going?"

Parvati became very pleased and her heart was filled up with extreme joy. She requested him to take to her father regarding their marriage. Lord Shiva agreed. He went back to Kailash mountain and narrated the whole story to his Ganas - Nandi, Bhairav etc. Everyone became very happy and awaited eagerly for the day Shiva would marry Parvati.

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SHIVA DEMAND PARVATI AS HIS CONSORT

Parvati, after successfully accomplishing her penance came back to her home. Everybody was happy at her arrival.

After sometime Himalaya went out to take his bath in the river Ganges. Meanwhile lord Shiva arrived in his appearance of Nataraj and started dancing in front of Parvati's mother Maina. She was so pleased by his dance that she wanted to present jewels to him in appreciation, but Shiva refused to take them. He expressed his desire to marry Parvati, which made Maina furious.

In the meantime, Himalaya arrived and she informed him what Shiva had said. He became angry too and ordered his attendants to drive away Nataraj (Shiva) from that place. Shiva then showed his divine appearance due to which Himalaya had the vision of Lord Vishnu and Parvati sitting by the side of lord Shiva in him. Himalaya was very surprised.

Lord Shiva again demanded Parvati to be made as his consort, but Himalaya in his ignorance again refused it. Nataraj then returned back to his abode.

After Shiva went back, Himalaya had a feeling that perhaps it was lord Shiva himself, who had arrived in the appearance of Nararaj. He realized what a grave blunder had been committed. Because of their guilt consciousness, both Maina and Himalaya felt the germination of devotion in their heart.

Indra and the other deities became afraid when they saw both Himalaya and Maina having deep devotion towards lord Shiva. They apprehended that if Himalaya happily agrees to marry Parvati with Shiva, then he would no longer live on the earth- He would attain salvation. His departure would make the earth devoid of jewels and other kinds of wealth.

To prevent this from happening, they went to Brihaspati and requested him to influence Himalayas mind by condemning Shiva. But Brihaspati refused to comply.

The deities then went to lord Brahma and made the same request. Brahma refused to meet their demand.

Now the deities went to lord Shiva and requested him not to marry Parvati as it would make the earth devoid of all kinds of wealth. Lord Shiva feeling pity agreed to help them.

Lord Shiva went to Himalaya in the guise of a hermit and started cursing himself (Shiva). Maina was deeply influenced by the hermits word and decided not to marry Parvati with Shiva. She also threatened to give up her life along with Parvati. If Parvati was married with Shiva against her wish.

Lord Shiva summoned the Saptarishis and instructed them to convince Maina and Himalaya to marry Parvati with him, so that Tarakasur could be killed. He feared that his actions would have created many misconceptions in their minds.

The Saptarishis went to Himalaya and tried to make him, so that Tarakasur could be killed. He feared that his actions would have created many misconceptions in their minds.

The Saptarishis went to Himalaya and tried to make him understand that there was not any other way out than marrying Parvati with Shiva. They also warned both Himalaya and Maina if they did not give their conscent to marry Parvati with Shiva, then she would be forcibly abducted by him (Shiva), causing death and destruction to their whole clan. The Saptarishis then narrated the following story-

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ANARANYA-THE KING

There was a king named Anaranya, who belonged to the lineage of fourteenth Manu-Indrasavami. He was a great devotee of lord Shiva. He

had five queens from whom one hundred sons and a very beautiful daughter named Padma were bom.

When Padma grew up, the king started looking for a suitable match. One day while Padma was taking her bath in the Bhadra river, sage Pippalada arrived there. He became enchanted by Padma's beauty.

After gathering informations about her from the people, he went to king Anaranya and expressed his wish to marry Padma. He threatened him of dire consequences if she was not married to her.

Anaranya became frightened and gave his daughter to him. Sage Pippalada happily went away accompanied by Padma. But both the king and the queen went to the forest because of the sorrow of giving their young daughter to an old sage. The queen died because of her grief. The king, because of his deep devotion towards Shiva attained to the abode of Shiva.

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PADMA AND PIPPALAD

On the request of Himalayas, Sage Vashishtha who was one of the Saptarishis narrated the story of Padma the princess and sage Pippalad-

"At the time of his marriage sage Pippalad was old and weak, but still Padma devotely performed the duties of a faithful wife.

To test her faithfulness towards her husband, Dharmaraj arrived at the bank of that river where Padma was taking her bath. He was in the guise of a young and handsome prince. He coaxed Padma to leave behind her 'old husband' and come along with him. Padma became furious and cursed him. Dharmaraj became very pleased and revealed his true identity. He also asked as to how the effects of her curse could be nullified.

Padma told her that his sins would result in having four legs during the era of Satya, but they reduced to three during the era of treta, which would again reduced to two legs during the era of Dwapar and ultimately he would have only one leg during the era of Kali. Padma also told her that even his single leg would disappear during the ending phase of Kali. "This would apropriately act as an atonement for your sins." - said Padma.

Dharmaraj blessed her by saying that she would have ten sons and also that her husband would possess youth and long life for eternity.

After listening to this story. Himalaya agreed to marry Parvati with Shiva. The Saptarishis then went back to lord Shiva and gave the good news to him.

Himalaya then requested sage Garga to prepare a beautiful Lagna-Patrikas which were then sent to his near and dear ones. He then requested Vishwakarma to construct a beautiful 'mandap' for the marriage, which was constructed by him in a very short time.

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LORD SHIVA'S MARRIAGE PROCESSION—DIVINE PLAYS

Lord Shiva invited all of his Ganas to the marriage ceremony. He also instructed sage Narada to intimate all the deities, sages and the celestial

entities.

After getting the invitation from Shiva everybody started making preparations to be a part of Shiva's marriage-procession. The seven mothers- Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahai, Aindri and Chamunda dressed him up beautifully Shiva then performed all the necessary Karmas to pacify the planet. At last this wonderful marriage-procession of Shiva proceeded towards the in-laws house.

Shiva proceeded with his marriage procession which considered of crores of his 'Ganas' and deities like Vishnu who were boarded on their vehicles. Even Narada and Lord Brahma were present in his (Shiva's) marriage procession.

First of all, Shiva sent Narada to Himalaya's house to inform him about their (marriage procession) arrival. Himalaya sent his son Mainak to receive them.

When Maina saw that the marriage procession was coming she curiously told Narada about her desire to see her son in law.

Shiva understood the arrongance which her desire contained. He wanted to teach her a lesson. He sent all the deities one by one. Maina mistook each one of them to be Shiva, but was later informed by Narada that in fact they were not Shiva but the attendants of Shiva.

Maina was very delighted and wondered how handsome the master (Shiva) must be, if the attendants were so handsome. Right then Shiva arrived with his Ganas - His body coated with ashes on it. His Ganas too were looking ferocious. Maina could not bear this horrible sight and lost her consciousness.

The maid servants arrived instantaneously and helped Maina to regain her consciousness. She started crying and cursing everybody. She thought was responsible for her daughter's marriage with Shiva. Nobody was spared- Narada, the Saptarishis and even her own sons. She even admonished Parvati by saying—

"Did you do severe penance to get such a horrible husband like this (Shiva)?"

Lord Brahma and Narada tried to console and convince her, but it was of no avail. When Himalaya tried to intervene, he was soundly rebuked. Maina threatened him that if this marriage took place then it would be the last day of her life.

At last lord Vishnu arrived and tried to pacify her anger by saying that her anger was baseless as she had not seen the real appearance of Shiva, which bestows benediction. Lord Vishnu and Narada then eulogised Shiva who on being pleased showed his most enchanting beauty.

LORD SHIVA'S MARRIAGE PROCESSION—DIVINE PLAYS

Lord Shiva invited all of his Ganas to the marriage ceremony. He also instructed sage Narada to intimate all the deities, sages and the celestial entities.

After getting the invitation from Shiva everybody started making preparations to be a part of Shiva's marriage-procession. The seven mothers- Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahai, Aindri and Chamunda dressed him up beautifully Shiva then performed all the necessary Karmas to pacify the planet. At last this wonderful marriage-procession of Shiva proceeded towards the in-laws house.

Shiva proceeded with his marriage procession which considered of crores of his 'Ganas' and deities like Vishnu who were boarded on their vehicles. Even Narada and Lord Brahma were present in his (Shiva's) marriage procession.

First of all, Shiva sent Narada to Himalaya's house to inform him about their (marriage procession) arrival. Himalaya sent his son Mainak to receive them.

When Maina saw that the marriage procession was coming she curiously told Narada about her desire to see her son in law.

Shiva understood the arrongance which her desire contained. He wanted to teach her a lesson. He sent all the deities one by one. Maina mistook each one of them to be Shiva, but was later informed by Narada that in fact they were not Shiva but the attendants of Shiva.

Maina was very delighted and wondered how handsome the master (Shiva) must be, if the attendants were so handsome. Right then Shiva arrived with his Ganas - His body coated with ashes on it. His Ganas too were looking ferocious. Maina could not bear this horrible sight and lost her consciousness.

The maid servants arrived instantaneously and helped Maina to regain her consciousness. She started crying and cursing everybody. She thought was responsible for her daughter's marriage with Shiva. Nobody was spared- Narada, the Saptarishis and even her own sons. She even admonished Parvati by saying--

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Maina now became fully satisfied. Himalaya too felt proud of her daughter's good fortune. At last Shiva entered the Mandap (canopy) where marriage ceremony was going to be organised. He saw Parvati sitting there. Both of them were very delighted to see each other.

After the marriage ceremony was over, Sage Garg helped Himalaya in performing the rite of Kanyadan, amidst the chantings of vedic mantras. The women's were singing auspicious songs. Himalaya presented large quantities of dowry to Shiva. Parvati's companions were engaged with Shiva in jocular and humorous conversation.

Rati- the wife of Kamadeva, seeing the moment opportune, arrived and requested Shiva to bring back her dead husband back to life. Her wailings made the other goddesses very sympathetic towards her. They too requested Shiva to make her dead husband back to life.

Feeling pity on her condition. Shiva brought back Kamadeva back to life from the ashes which Rati had given to him. On seeing her husband alive, Rati's heart was filled up with extreme joy. Both of them eulogised lord Shiva and expressed their gratitude.

After the marriage ceremony was over the marriage-processionist sought the permission of Himalaya to make a move, but he requested them to remain there for some more days.

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SHIVA'S DEPARTURE WITH PARVATI TO KAILASH

Shiva remained at his in-laws house for many days. One day he sought the permission of Himalaya to go back. Everybody became sad at the

prospect of Shiva's departure. Especially Maina who was very saddened by this news. At last it was time for Shiva to depart for Kailash, accompanied by Parvati.

Lord Shiva and Parvati were blissfully enjoying their martial status, unaware of the eagerness with which the deities were awaiting the arrival of their progeny.

Tarakasur - the demon continued tormenting the deities. When their miseries became unbearable they went to lord Brahma to seek their help. All of them then went to lord Vishnu. They told him that even after passing of such a long duration of time, Parvati and Shiva had not yet become parents. They requested lord Vishnu to remind Shiva about the purpose behind his marriage.

Initially lord Vishnu showed his disinclination to disturb Shiva's martial bliss, but when the deities insisted he went to Shiva accompanied by all of them. All of them eulogised Shiva and Parvati. The deities then requested Shiva to make his contribution in the destruction of Tarakasur.

Shiva understood everything. Some drops of his semen fell down on the ground. On being insisted by the deities, Agni transformed his appeared in the form of a pigeon and pecked up those drops of semen.

Right then Parvati arrived there and became extremely furious on seeing the semen going waste. She cursed the deities that their respective wives would remain issue less as the consequences of their mindless acts.

Agni was having inflammation in his stomach because of the Shiva's semen. Lord Shiva advised him to transfer it into the womb of any noble woman. Agni followed the instruction and injected the semen into the body of six women through the pores of the hair on their body.

Those women could not bear the extreme luster of the Shiva's semen. They went to Himachal and evacuated it. Even Himachal could not bear its extreme effulgence and immersed it into the flowing Ganga. River Ganga carried it with her current and established it amidst bushes of reed (Sarkanda). Instantaneously a beautiful child manifested from it. His birth made all the deities extremely joyous including Shiva and Parvati. It was the sixth day (bright half of the lunar month) of the Hindu month of

Margashirsha. He was Kartikeya.

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KARTIKEYA

Sage Vishwamitra arrived at the spot where the child had manifested. On the repeated insistence of the child, Vishwamitra performed his purification rites and named him 'Guha'.

The divine child blessed Vishwamitra and bestowed divine knowledge to him. He also blessed him to become famous as 'Brahmarshi'. Agnideva arrived there and gave a divine weapon named 'Shakti' to that child. Guha went to the Kroncha mountain and banged his weapon on it. The mountain could not bear the effect of the blow and started crumbling down. Innumerable demons living on that mountain came to kill him. But the child killed all of them by his weapon.

When Indra heard about his bravery, he came along with other deities to fight him Indra assaulted Guha with his Vajra on the right side of his body, which resulted into the manifestation of a very powerful entity named 'Shakh'. Indra again assaulted him on the left side of his body, from which manifested an extremely powerful entity named 'Vishakh'. Indra assaulted Guha for the third time- this time his chest was the target. From this third blow of Indra manifested 'Naigam'.

Guha accompanied by all the three powerful entities- Shakh, Vishakh and Naigam attacked Indra and his army, but they fled away.

Six goddesses arrived on the scene. All of them tried to feed that small child out of affection. They started quarelling among themselves. Right then they were surprised to see the child appearing with six head. Now their problems were solved. Each of the goddesses fed their breast milk to the child. They took Guha with them and brought him up with great love and care. Guha later on became famous as Kartikeya.

One day, Parvati curiously asked Shiva about his semen which had fallen on the ground. Lord Shiva summoned the deities and asked them about it. The deities narrated the whole story. Both Shiva and Parvati were very pleased to know about Kartikeya.

Lord Shiva then ordered his Ganas to bring Kartikeya from the possession of Kritika. The Ganas reached Badrikasharama where Kritika lived. When Kritika saw the Ganas she became very frightened but Kartikeya gave him solace. The Ganas requested Kartikeya to come along

with him.

Kartikeya happily took permission from his mothers and proceeded to meet Shiva and Parvati.

At the time or Kartikeya's departure, the mothers had become very emotional. Kartikeya consoled them. He then boarded the beautiful chariot which had been sent by Parvati and proceeded towards Kailash mountain.

All the deities including Shiva were eagerly awaiting his arrival. When Kartikeya reached Kailash mountain, he was given a royal reception. The whole atmosphere was filled up with joy. Everybody was celebrating. Each of the deities presented him their respective weapons to him.

Lord Shiva coronated him as the king with the help of the brahmin. This way he had now become the lord of Kailashpuri.

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Kartikeya narrated a story connected with himself:-

"One day a brahmin, whose name was Narada came to me and requested me to help him find his he-goat which had got lost. He told me that the

goat was supposed to be offered as the sacrifice.

"If the goat was not found, my vow would remain unfulfilled." Said Narada

I went in search of that goat. I found it in the Vishnuloka where it was creating nuisance. When the goat saw me, it tried to attack me with its sharp horns. I climbed on its back. After travelling through all the three worlds, the goat returned back to his original place. I climbed down from its back.

Narada arrived and demanded his goat. I told him that his Yagya had been accomplished by my blessings and there was no need to sacrifice the poor goat. Narada - the brahmin went back satisfied.

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KILLING OF TARAKASUR

The deities were very encouraged by the presence of Kartikeya amidst themselves. They were beaming with confidence and enthusiasm. The

deities assembled at the seashore. Tarakasur arrived there with his huge army. The battle began.

Tarakasur appeared to be invincible. His blow was so severe that Indra fell down unconscious. All the 'Lokpalas' met the same fate. After that Tarakasur fought with Veerbharda and made him unconscious. Even Lord Vishnu could not sustain for long and was ultimately defeated.

Lord Brahma requested Kartikeya to fight with Tarakasur as nobody except him would be able to kill him.

On being instructed by lord Brahma Kartikeya came forward to fight with Tarakasur. Tarakasur ridiculed the deities for taking the shield of a small child.

"If he gets killed by me, the responsibility should lie on you." Thundered Tarakasur.

A fierce battle started between both of them in which both of them got injured. At last seeing an opportune moment, Kartikeya hit Tarakasur on his chest with his weapon- Shakti. The blow proved to be fatal and as a result Tarakasur died.

Kartikeya feat was hailed by all the deities. After killing Tarakasur, Kartikeya went to mother Parvati, who affectionately took him into her lap. He was eulogized by all the deities.

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KILLINGS OF PRALAMB AND BANASUR

The mountain - Kraunch, who was tormented by the activities of the demon named Banasur, went to Kartikeya and narrated his woeful tales.

Kartikeya threw his weapon - Shakti in the direction which Banasur lived. The weapon banged right on target and returned back to him. Bamnasur was burnt to ashes. Kraunch went back being very pleased. The mountain - Kraunch established three Shivalingas to please lord Shiva. The names of these three Shivalingas were - Kumareshwar, Pratigyeshwar and Kapaleshwar.

Once upon a time, the deities were trying to reach the abode of Lord Shiva- Kailash mountain. Their preceptor Brihaspati was walking ahead of all of them. Meanwhile a demon by the name of Pralamb started creating turbulence. After being tormented by his activities, Kumud - son of Sheshnag took Kartikeya's refuge. Kartikeya killed the demon with his divine weapon - Shakti.

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GANESH

Once Narada had a desire to listen to the tales of Ganesha. Brahma replied -

"There were various Ganeshas in different Kalpas. During the period of 'Shweta-Kalpa', Ganesha was bom to Shiva and Parvati, when they went to Kailash mountain shortly after their marriage.

"Once while going to take her bath, Parvati instructed Nandi, to stand guard at the entrance and not to allow anybody to enter the premise without her permission. Lord Shiva arrived there by chance. Despite of Nandi's refusal to allow him, in he went inside. Parvati did not like this.

One day it happened so that Once again, Parvati wanted to take her bath. She made an idol from the dirt of her body. She made the idol alive and instructed him not to allow anybody without her permission. She also gave him a stick for his protection.

Incidentally lord Shiva arrived once again. He tried to enter inside but Ganesha refused to let him go inside. But when Shiva tried to go inside forcibly, Ganesha hit him with his stick. Lord Shiva became furious and ordered his ganas to kill him.

The ganas of Shiva attacked Ganesha but all of them were no match for him. After being defeated by Ganesha, the Shivaganas went to Shiva and narrated everything.

While the Shivaganas were narrating their stories, Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and some other deities arrived there. Lord Brahma then went to Ganesha to convince him, but as soon as Ganesha saw him he tried to attack lord Brahma. Brahma came back without achieving anything. After this lord Shiva himself came to fight Ganesha.

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SHIVA SEVERS GANESHA'S HEAD -LATER GIVEN ELEPHANT HEAD

A fierce battle was fought between Shiva and Ganesha. When Lord Shiva realized that Ganesha was dominating the fight, he severed his head with

his trishul.

Parvati became extremely furious at the death of Ganesha. Her anger resulted into the manifestation of innumerable goddesses, who started creating havoc on the deities.

The deities became frightened and they were forced to take the refuge of Parvati. They eulogized her and requested to be pardoned. Parvati told them that they could be saved only when Ganesha becomes alive and becomes worshippable just like thee (deities).

The deities went to lord Shiva and requested him to make Ganesha alive once again. Lord Shiva instructed them to go in the northern direction and bring the head of any creature they might find and join it with the trunk of Ganesha. The deities followed the instruction and went in the northern direction.

They found an elephant which had only one tusk. They severed the elephant's head and joined it with the trunk of Ganesha. By the blessings of Shiva, Ganesha became alive once again. The deities worshipped Ganesha and returned back to their respective abodes.

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GANESHA'S MARRIAGE

Both Kartikeya and Ganesha grew up to become handsome youths in due course of time. Shiva and Parvati started to think about their marriage.

When Ganesha and Kartikeya came to know about the plan of their marriage both of them started quarreling among themselves as to who should get married first.

Lord Shiva and Parvati devised a plan to sort out this problem. They told them that whoever between them return after circumambulating the earth, will get married first of all.

Kartikeya and Ganesha agreed. Kartikeya proceeded on his journey to circumambulate the earth. Ganesha was very intelligent. He requested his parents - Lord Shiva and Parvati; to sit at a place together and circumambulated them for seven times and said-

"According to Veda, Circumambulating one's parents give virtues equivalent to that of circumambulating the whole earth. So now you must get me married first."

Lord Shiva and Parvati were very impressed by his intelligence. They decided to get him married with Siddhi and Riddhi-the daughter of Vishwaroop Prajapati. In due course of time two sons were born to them Kshem and Labh.

While Kartikeya was returning after circumambulating the whole earth, he met sage Narada on the way. He told Kartikeya about Ganesha's marriage. Kartikeya became very sad and felt like having been cheated by their parents.

When Kartikeya reached Kailash mountain he made salutations to lord Shiva and Parvati and without saying anything, went to Kraunch mountain to do his penance.

Parvati was very sad. She went to Kraunch mountain to meet Kartikeya accompanied by Shiva. When Kartikeya saw them coming he moved to another place. Lord Shiva and Parvati followed him and ultimately met him. Both these places have religious significance. Having a darshan of Kartikeya on the full moon day of Kritika nakashatra is considered to bestows immense auspicious and destroyes all the sins of a man.

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YUDH KHAND

TRIPURASUR - THE THREE DEMONS

Narada requested lord Brahma to narrate how lord Shiva annihilated the demons. Lord Brahma narrated the tale of Tripurasur.

"After the killing of Tarakasur, three of his sons started doing their penance. The eldest among them was Tarkasha, younger to him was Viddyunmali and Kamalaksha was the youngest. I (Brahma) became very pleased by their tremendous penance."

"They requested me to create three invincible forts for them, which should be full of all kinds of wealth and splendour and which nobody could be able to break."

"A golden fort was constructed for Taraksha; for Kamlaksha a fort of silver was constructed and for Viddyunmali iron-fort was constructed. I had ordered the demon named Maya to construct these forts. One of these forts was constructed in the sky, the other was constructed on the earth and the third was constructed in the nether world."

"After constructing the forts for them Maya took the responsibility of protecting them. I (Brahma) warned the three demons that they would be killed by lord Shiva. After this I came back."

The three demon-brothers started tormenting the deities. The deities went to lord Brahma and narrated about their miseries. Lord Brahma instructed them to seek the help of Shiva. They went to lord Shiva and explained about their woes. They also requested Shiva to eliminate those three demons. Lord Shiva instructed them to go to lord Vishnu and said-

"The Tripurasurs are very virtuous so they could not be killed. You all must go to lord Vishnu and try to seek his help."

The deities then went to lord Vishnu and made the same request. Lord Vishnu performed an oblation. Thousands of armed spirit appeared from the yagya-kunda. Lord Vishnu sent these spirits to kill the three demon-brothers. But these spirits were no match for the Tripurasurs might and they had to run for their lives. They came to lord Vishnu and narrated the whole story. Lord Vishnu became very worried. He sent back all the deities and started thinking about the means, Tripurasurs could be killed.

Lord Vishnu came to the conclusion that the Tripurasurs could not be

killed till they remain Virtuous and religious. He then created an illusionary entity from his body who had no hairs on his head. He had worn dirty clothes and a bag was hanging down his shoulder. He also had a broom in his head.

The entity asked lord Vishnu about the purpose of his existence and his name. Lord Vishnu told him that his name was Arihan. He also instructed him to create a scripture which stresses upon the importance of action (Karmavad) and which is different from the rituals explained in the Vedas. Lord Vishnu specifically instructed him to keep the language of that scripture as simple and degenerated as possible.

TRIPURASUR - THE THREE DEMONS

Narada requested lord Brahma to narrate how lord Shiva annihilated the demons. Lord Brahma narrated the tale of Tripurasur.

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Lord Vishnu then preached Arihan on the science of illusion which stressed that the heaven or the hell does not exist anywhere else, but on this earth itself.

Lord Vishnu instructed Arihan to get Tripurasurs initiated into with this philosophy so that the demon-brothers become irreligious. Vishnu ordered Arihan to make his residence in a desert with his disciples.

"You should propagate your philosophy when Kali Yuga arrives" - said Lord Vishnu.

After giving his instruction lord Vishnu disappeared. Arihan then created four illusionary entities from his bein who were supposed to act as his followers. Their names were Rishi, Yati, Keerya and Upadhyay.

Now the time had arrived to enter the forts of Tripurasurs. All of them entered the forts and in a gradual manner started increasing their influence. As a result the Tripurasurs became irreligious. Not only that, their subjects too became irreligious in a very short time.

When the deities saw that the Tripurasurs had become irreligious completely, they went to lord Shiva and requested him to kill Tripurasurs. Right then mother Parvati arrived there accompanied by Kartik and Ganesha. She requested Shiva to come along with her into the palace. All the deities followed them and kept on requesting. The deities were angry that Parvati had caused obstacles in the fulfillment of their objective. They could not conceal their anger and expressed it.

One of the ganas of Shiva, whose name was Kumbhodar angrily attacked the deities. All of them got injured and went to lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu advised them to chant the five lettered mantra -OM NAMAH SHIVAY for one crore times. The deities followed the instruction. Lord Shiva became pleased and appeared before them. He assured the deities that their wishes would be fulfilled.

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KILLINGS OF TRIPURASURS

When Shiva agreed to kill the demon - brothers Tripurasur the deities became extremely joyous. They gave their respective weapons to Shiva, so

that he did not have any difficulty in killing the demons. Vishwakarma gave his beautiful chariot to him.

Lord Shiva proceeded towards the forts of Tripurasur followed by a huge army of the deities. His army entered the forts of his bow but he was not able to release it. He remained in this position for one thousand years but still he was not successful in releasing his arrow.

Lord Shiva then worshipped Ganesha and heard a heavenly voice instructing him to use his weapon - Pashupat. Lord Shiva released it in the direction of the forts of Tripurasur. All the three forts were destroyed by the assault of Pashupat and it created havoc among the demons.

Seeing death and destruction all around them - Tripurasurs prayed to lord Shiva to have mercy on them. Lord Shiva assured them that after their death they would be born as his ganas. At last Tripurasurs were burnt to death. Maya was the only demon who survived. After their death the Tripurasurs were privileged to be reborn as the ganas of Shiva.

After the killings of three demons- Tripurasur, lord Shiva's anger had still not subdivided. The anger was pacified only after the deities and the sages prayed to him. He blessed the deities by saying that he would always be present on their side to protect them.

Maya - Who had survived the Shiva's attack, arrived there and he too was blessed by lord Shiva. After that Arihan arrived with his followers and worshipped Shiva. Lord Shiva blessed him and his followers. After taking permission from lord Vishnu, Arihan proceeded towards a desert region accompanied by his followers. After receiving the boon the deities too received to their respective abode.

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LORD SHIVA SPARES THE LIFE OF INDRA

Suta narrates the following story to the sages-

"Once upon a time, Indra was going towards Kailash mountain to have a 'darshan' of lord Shiva. Sage Brihaspati was accompanying him.

Lord Shiva came to know about his arrival. He wanted to test his devotion towards him. While both Indra and Brihaspati were still on their way. Lord Shiva met them on their in the guise of a hermit.

Indra did not recognize Shiva, who was sitting on the way disguised as a hermit. Indra inquired as to who he was and where he lived. Lord Shiva sat quietly without saying a word. Indra repeatedly asked the same question, but each time Shiva remained quiet. Indra became furious and tried to attack lord Shiva with his Vajra.

Lord Shiva paralyzed the raised hands of Indra by his divine power. Shiva's eyes had reddened due to anger which made Indra very frightened sage Brihaspati was able to recognize the real identity of the hermit as to who he was. He made salutations to lord Shiva and requested him to pardon Indra. Lord Shiva became pleased and diverted the power of his radiant eyes to the ocean. This way Indra's life was spared by Shiva. Lord Shiva then returned to Kailash mountain. Indra and Sage Brihaspati to Kailash mountain. Indra and sage Brihaspati too returned to their respective abodes.

MANIFESTATION OF JALANDHAR

The effulgence, which had been divided by lord Shiva into the Ocean resulted into the manifestation of a small child. This incident happened at the place where river Ganges submerged into the ocean and which is also known as Gangasagar now a days.

The child was crying so ferociously that an environment of fear was created everywhere. The deities and the sages went to lord Brahma to satisfy their curiously. Lord Brahma assured then to find out the reason. He went to the seashore. The sea put the child in his lap and enquired about the name of that child and also about his future.

Meanwhile the child pressed lord Brahma's neck with such power that tears rolled down from his eyes. For this reason he named the child as Jalandhar. Lord Brahma told the sea that the child will become the mighty ruler of the demons. No deity would be able to kill him except

Shiva.

The sea was very pleased by lord Brahma's predictions. After Lord Brahma returned to his abode, the sea brought that child to his home and brought up that child with great love and care.

When Jalandhar grew up he married Vrinda, who was the daughter of Kalnemi. Later on he became the ruler of the demons.

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BATTLE BETWEEN JALANDHAR AND THE DEITIES

One day Sage Bhrigu came to meet Jalandhar. After receiving him with due respect Jalandhar asked him as to who severed the head of Rahu.

Sage Bhrigu then told him about Hiranyakashipu who was the maternal uncle of Rahu. Sage Bhrigu also told him about Virochana - the son of the extremely charitable king Bali. Then sage Bhrigu narrated the tale connected with the churning of ocean and how ambrosia emerged from the churning of the ocean.

Sage Bhrigu told Jalandhar how Rahu's head was severed by lord Vishnu, while he was sitting among the deities and at the time when ambrosia was being distributed to all the deities.

Jalandhar became very furious after hearing this story. He summoned one of his messengers whose name was Ghasmar and instructed him to go and ask Indra, as to why had he misappropriated all the wealth of his father (Sea) which emerged during the churning of Sea. He also instructed Ghasmar to warn Indra about the dire consequences unless he takes his (Indra's) refuge.

But Indra sent back Ghasmar without any specific assurance. This action of Indra made Jalandhar more angry than before. He collected his army and attacked Indra.

A fierce battle was fought between his army and the army of the deities. Many warriors got killed from both the sides. Shukracharya the guru of the deities brought back the dead warriors from the demon side back to life by his mritasanjivani vidya. Similarly Sage Brihaspati brought back the dead warriors from the deities 4 side back to life with the help of medicinal herbs.

When Shukracharya saw that, sage Brihaspati too was successfully making the dead deities alive, he instructed Jalandhar to submerge the Drongiri mountain into the sea, so that it becomes impossible for Brihaspati to get the medicinal herbs by the help of which he made the dead deities alive.

Jalandhar obeyed the command of Shukracharya and by lifting the Drongiri mountain submerged it into the sea. The deities became demoralized and fled from the battlefield Jalandhar captured Indrapuri.

The terrified deities took the refuge of lord Vishnu and sought his help. Lord Vishnu gave a patient hearing and agreed to help them, but there

was a hitch. His consort goddess Lakshmi considered Jalandhar as her brother because both of them originated from the sea. She instructed Lord Vishnu against killing Jalandhar.

Lord Vishnu promised to her that he won't kill Jalandhar. After giving his word to goddess Lakshmi, he went to fight a battle with Jalandhar.

A fierce battle was fought between both of them which remained indecisive till the end. Lord Vishnu became very much impressed by the valiance of Jalandhar and asked him to demand any boon he liked.

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Jalandhar requested him to make his dwelling in the Ksheersagar-the abode of Jalandhar, along with his sister (Lakshmi). Lord Vishnu agreed to fulfill his wish and started living in the Ksheersagar along with his consort Lakshmi.

Being undefeated by Lord Vishnu himself, Jalandhar became the ruler of all the three world. All his subjects were satisfied by his just and virtuous rule, except the deities. The deities now eulogized lord Shiva to seek his help in defeating Jalandhar.

According to the wish of lord Shiva, Sage Narada came to meet the deities. The deities narrated their woeful tales to him. Feeling pity on their condition, he went accorded a grand reception by Jalandhar which pleased him very much.

Narada praised the splendours and prosperity of Jalandhar but added that it was nothing in comparison to Shiva's splendours Narada told him that inspite of all his authority and splendours, his prosperity was still incomplete, as he did not have a consort. Jalandhar asked curiously as to where could he find his consort.

According to his strategy, Narada advised Jalandhar to make Parvati as his consort Jalandhar fell into Narada's trap. He sent 'Rahu' to lord Shiva with a proposal to part with Parvati. Rahu went to lord Shiva and demanded Parvati, which made lord Shiva extremely furious. His anger resulted into the manifestation of a ferocious creature, which ran towards 'Rahu' to devour him. Rahu had no option but to take the refuge of Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva protected the life of'Rahu'.

The hungry creature, asked Shiva as to what should he eat to satisfy his hunger. Lord Shiva instructed him to devour his own limbs. The creative followed his instructions and devoured his limbs. Lord Shiva was very pleased by his sense of obedience. He named that creature of his palace. He also blessed him saying that he too would be worshipped along with him (Shiva).

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BATTLE BETWEEN LORD SHIVA AND JALANDHAR

Rahu went back to Jalandhar and narrated the whole story to him. Jalandhar then attacked Kailash mountain with his huge army. A fierce

battle was fought between the Shiva-ganas and the demons.

When Jalandhar realized that lord Shiva had begun to dominate the battle he created beautiful 'Apsaras' and 'Gandharvas' by his illusionary powers to divert the attention of lord Shiva and his ganas. He was successful in his attempt. Lord Shiva and his ganas became enchanted by the heavenly beauty of the apsaras. They stopped fighting and started watching their dance and music.

Meanwhile Jalandhar went to Parvati in the guise of lord Shiva but was recognized by her. Being enchanted by the beauty of goddess Parvati, he looked at her with his evil intentions, but was immobilized by her wrath.

Mother Parvati then went to lord Vishnu and narrated the whole story. She wanted to teach Jalandhar a lesson. She requested lord Vishnu to go to Jalandhar's wife in the guise of Jalandhar and act in the same way. Jalandhar had dared to do.

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VRINDA GETA DISHONORED

With the help of his divine powers. Lord Vishnu created many inauspicious dreams while Vrinda was asleep. Vrinda became very

restless and when the anxieties become unbearable she proceeded towards the forest.

Vrinda saw a hermit in the forest who was preaching his disciples. The hermit was none other than lord Vishnu. She went to that hermit and prayed to save her husband's life.

Lord Vishnu disappeared from the scene and reappeared - this time in the guise of Jalandhar. But Vrinda was unable to recognize the real identity of her husband. She was very pleased after finding her husband. Both of them stayed in that very forest as husband and wife for a very long time.

One day, she came to know about the real identity of the person, who was impersonating as her husband. Realizing that her chastity has been breached, she cursed lord Vishnu by saying that just as he had played a deceitful trick with her in the same way somebody would deceitfully abduct his wife and he too would wander in her search.

After cursing lord Vishnu, Vrinda embraced death by entering into the fire.

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KILLING OF JALANDHAR

On the other side, after the departure of Parvati from Kailash Mountain and after the illusionary powers created by Jalandhar had ended all the

apsaras and gandharvas vanished. Shiva realized that whatever he was watching, was nothing more than illusion.

Lord Shiva recommenced his battle. The demons-Shumbh and Nishumbh, came forward to fight with him, but ultimately they had to flee from the battlefield. Lord Shiva warned both of them that though they had escaped death at that moment, but they would be killed by Parvati.

Now Jalandhar again arrived to fight with lord Shiva. A fierce battle commenced between them. Finding an opportune time, Shiva severed the head of Jalandhar by his 'Chakra' which had been created from his toe. After his death, Jalandhar's soul united with Shiva.

When the deities came to know about the killing of Jalandhar, they became overjoyed. They came to Lord Shiva and eulogized him. Thy also hailed his great achievement. After expressing their gratitude they returned to their respective abodes.

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MANIFESTATION OF 'AMLA' (MYROBALAN), TULSI (BASIL) AND 'MALTI'

Lord Vishnu was very much saddened by the death of Vrinda. He took the

ashes from the pyre and after applying them on his body started wondering here and there.

The deities became very worried to see the condition of lord Vishnu. They went to lord Shiva and requested him to eliminate the false attachment with which Sri Vishnu was suffering.

Lord Shiva sent the deities to goddess Parvati, saying that she would ceratainly help in this regard.

The deities went to goddess Parvati and prayed to her. She became very pleased and with the assistance of Lakshmi and Saraswati, gave some seeds to then. The deities sprayed those seeds on the pyre, on which Vrinda had given up her life. Three holy plants manifested from that pyre-Amla, Tulsi and Malti. Later on Tulsi and Malti attained to the Vishnuloka, by the virtue of their respective penance.

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BIRTH OF SHANKHACHUDA AND HIS MARRIAGE

Suta narrated the tale of the birth of Shankhachuda and how Shiva killed him with his Trishula. He told the sages that Shankhachuda was born to

the demon king 'Dambha'. Shankhachuda was in fact, Sudama, in his previous life. He was born in the family of demons due to the curse of Radha. When Shankhachuda grew up, he went to Pushkar (Ajmer, Rajasthan) and did a tremendous penance to please lord Brahma. Lord Brahma blessed him and said that he would remain invincible. He also instructed Shankhachuda to go to 'Badrikashrama' where he would find his would be wife Tulsi, the daughter of Dharmadhwaja.

Shankhachuda went to Badrikasharama and married Tulsi as per the instructions of lord Brahma. He then returned back to his capital accompanied by his wife Tulsi.

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SHANKHACHUDA BECOMES THE RULER OF ALL THE THREE WORLDS

When Shankhachuda reached his capital after marrying Tulsi, he was crowned as the king of the demons by Shukracharya. After his coronation, Shankhachuda attacked Indrapuri supported by his huge army and defeated the deities. In a very short time all the three worlds were under his control.

After being defeated by Shankhachuda, the deities went to lord Brahma and sought his help in eliminating the menance called Shankhachuda. Lord Brahma then took them to lord Vishnu. All of them were taken to lord Shiva by Vishnu. They expressed their request to liberate them from the troubles created by Shankhachuda.

Lord Shiva assured the deities that he will certainly kill Shankhachuda and hence they should not worry about him. The deities then happily returned to their respective abodes.

Lord Shiva sent his messenger named Pushpadant, to Shankhachuda to ask him to return back the kingdom of the deities to them. Shankhachuda refused to oblige this demand, on the contrary he expressed his willingness and readiness to fight lord Shiva. Pushpadant returned back and narrated the whole story to lord Shiva.

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SHIVA KILLS SHANKHACHUDA

Lord Shiva was now fully convinced about the inevitability of the battle. He first sent all his ganas under the leadership of Kartekiye and Ganesha.

Later on Bhadrakali proceeded towards the battlefield with a huge army as per the own wish of lord Shiva himself. At last lord Shiva proceeded towards the battlefield accompanied by the deities. All the troops collected at the bank of river Chandrabhaga and rested under the shade of a Banyan tree.

Shankhachuda handed over the kingdom to his son and went to his wife to take her permission before going to the battlefield. His wife was reluctant to allow him to go, but he somehow managed to convince her. He then proceeded towards the banks of Chandrabhaga with a huge army.

A fierce battle started between the deities and the demons. Both of them attacked each other with the most destructive weapons. But when the army of Chandrachuda began to dominate the fight, the deities fled away and took the refuge of lord Shiva. They told Shiva of the number of deities who had been killed while fighting.

After the defeat of the deities and the ganas Kartikeya and Ganesha went to fight Shankhachuda. A spectacular battle was fought between Shankhachuda and both of them. Later on they were joined by Bhadrakali. Bhadrakali would have devoured Shankhachuda without any problem, but she spared his life because of the boon, given to him by Lord Brahma. Now it was the turn of Lord Shiva to join the battle, but even he could not cause any harm to him because of lord Brahma's boon.

While a tremendous battle was being fought between lord Shiva and Shankhachuda. Lord Vishnu appeared and demanded the armour from Shankhachuda, which he had put on, his body in the guise of a brahmin. Shankhachuda gave his armour to him without any kind of suspicion. Lord Vishnu then went to Shankhachuda's wife in the guise of her husband i.e. Shankhachuda. He destroyed the chastity of Tulsi, Shankhachuda's wife. Shankhachuda derived his power from the chastity of his wife and it vanished the moment, her chastity was destroyed.

Bhadrakali was creating havoc in the army of Shankhachuda. Shankhachuda became very furious and attacked Shiva. Shiva repulsed his assault and attacked him with his Trishul. Shankhachuda who had become powerless was killed instantaneously. The deities were very

pleased at the death of Shankhachuda. After worshipping lord Shiva they went back to their respective abodes.

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TULSI CURSES LORD VISHNU

After being instructed by goddess Parvati, Lord Vishnu had gone to Tulsi in the guise of her husband- Shankhachuda, so that the breach of Tulsi chastity could help lord Shiva to kill Shankhachuda, who derived his power from Tulsi's chastity and virtuosity.

Initially Tulsi could not recognize lord Vishnu. She was extremely joyous at his arrival. But very soon she was able to realize the real identity of lord Vishnu, who had disguised himself as her husband.

She became very angry and cursed lord Vishnu to become a stone. She was crying unconsolably. Lord Vishnu contemplated on Shiva as a result of which he appeared. Lord Shiva blessed Tulsi that she would become the beloved of Lord Vishnu.

Due to Tulsi's curse, Lord Vishnu attained the form of Shaligram which is a stone and because of lord Shiva's blessings. Tulsi leaves started being offered to the Shaligram, in the process of its worship.

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KILLING OF HIRANYAKSHA

While narrating the tale of Hiranyaksha's killing, Sutli said-

"Once, Shiva and Parvati were living at the Mandarachal mountain. Parvati, playfully covered both the eyes of Shiva with her palms. This made lord Shiva to perspire from his forehead. From this perspiration manifested a ferocious creature. Parvati asked Lord Shiva as to who this creature was. Lord Shiva told her that he was his son Andhak.

Parvati brought up Andhak with great love and care. Hiranyaksha the demon did a tremendous penance to please lord Shiva, with a desire to acquires a son. Lord Shiva became pleased with his penance and appeared before him. He asked Hiranyaksha to demand any boon, which he promised to fulfill.

Hiranyaksha expressed his desire to have a very powerful and mighty son. Shiva decided to give Andhak to him, who at that time was being brought up by Parvati. Hiranyaksha brought young Andhak along with him.

With the help of Andhak, he conquered all the three worlds. He lifted up the earth and proceeded towards the Netherworld. The deities became very terrified. They prayed to Lord Vishnu and when he appeared they requested him to kill Hiranyaksha.

Lord Vishnu killed Hiranyaksha in his incarnation of boar. After killing Hiranyaksha, Lord Vishnu made Andhak the king of Netherworld and place the earth at its original place.

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KILLING OF HIRANYAKSHIPU

Hiranyakashipu was filled with grief when he heard the news of his brothers' death. To avenge Hiranyaksha's death, he started to torment the

deities. Becoming homeless, the deities started wandering here and there. Hiranyakashipu was still unsatisfied. He wanted to acquire more power and authority. He went to the Mandarachal mountain and started doing a tremendous penance to please Lord Brahma.

Lord Brahma appeared before him and asked him demand anything he wished to be fulfilled. Hiranyakashipu said-

"O Lord! Bless me so that I do neither die during the day nor during the night; neither on the earth nor in the sky; neither by the deities nor by the demons; neither by a human being nor by an animal. Bless me O Lord! O that I do not get killed by any type of weapon."

Lord Brahma blessed Hiranyakshipu and said 'so be it'. Now, Hiranyakashipu became more ruthless and arrogant. He declared himself the almighty God and ordered his subjects to worship him and his idol. His son-Prahlada was a very great devotee of lord Vishnu. He did not pay heed to his father's command and continued to worship Lord Vishnu. Hiranyakashipu tried to kill Prahlada many times, but each time he survived by the blessings of lord Vishnu.

When Hiranyakashipu's atrocities crossed all its limits, the deities went to lord Vishnu and requested him to kill Hiranyakashipu. Lord Vishnu appeared in his incarnation of Nrisimha (half lion and half man) and killed Hiranyakashipu with his sharp nails, during the dusk. After giving his kingdom to his son Prahalad, Lord Vishnu went back to his abode.

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SHIVA TEACHES 'MRITASANJIVANI VIDDYA' TO SHUKRACHARYA

Shukracharya did a severe penance for five thousand years to please Shiva and acquire the secrets of Mritasanjivani Viddya (bringing back

dead person alive) from him.

When Lord Shiva did not appear even after such a tremendous penance, then he indulges himself in severest form of penance, by quitting having food and water. He now started living only on air. This continued for thousands of year.

Lord Shiva became very pleased with his penance. He manifested from the very Shivalinga, Shukracharya had been worshipping till now. He taught the secrets of 'Mritasanjivani' viddya to him and told him that by the help of this viddya he would become capable of making alive the dead persons. Lord Shiva also blessed Shukracharya to become a star and attain respectability among all the planets.

After blessing Shukracharya like this, Lord Shiva disappeared into the same Shivalinga from which he had appeared.

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BATTLE BETWEEN LORD SHIVA AND ANDHAK

Once, Andhak brothers jokingly told him that, since his real parents were somebody else (Shiva and Parvati) therefore he was not fit to rule them.

Though they had told this in good humour, yet Andhak was very much saddened by their remark. He relinquished his throne and went to a deserted place in the forest and started to do a severe penance. Lord Brahma became very pleased by his penance and appeared before him. He asked him to demand anything he wished to be fulfilled. Andhak said-

"I only long for the love and affection of my brothers. O Lord! Bless me so that nobody should be able to kill one except lord Shiva."

Lord Brahma blessed him and said- 'so be it'.

Andhak returned to his kingdom and with the co-operation of his brothers like Prahalad etc he brought even the deities under his control. But drunk with power he became very arrogant and started tormenting all the creatures. He did not show any respect to the Vedas, brahmin and the deities.

Andhak had become so arrogant that once he even dared to dishonor his own mother-Parvati, who at that time was living at the Mandarachal mountain. Shiva became very furious with him.

Andhak attacked Shiva with his huge army. Lord Shiva sent his numerous ganas to fight him, but all of them were killed by Andhak.

When lord Shiva got the news of the arrival of Andhak with his army, he sent Lord Vishnu and his remaining ganas to fight him. He himself went to perform his austerity named 'Pashupat'. The deities fought with Andhak for one thousand years. Meanwhile Lord Shiva returned after completing his 'Pashupat Vrata' and joined them.

Seeing Lord Shiva in front of him, Andhak became furious and attacked him ferociously. His companion, whose name was 'Vidhas', devoured all the deities. The demons who had been killed in the battle, were brought back to life by Shukracharya.

Lord Shiva became very angry and swallowed Shukracharya. He also extracted the deities from the stomach of Vidhas who had been swallowed by him earlier. After that, lord Shiva attacked Andhak with his trident, which injured him. But from each drop of his blood which fell on the ground, manifested thousands of demons who resembled Andhak.

Lord Shiva then instructed goddess 'Chandika' to drink the blood, while he killed all the demons. Goddess Chandika followed the instructions of Shiva and drank each drop of blood, which oozed out from the wounds of the demons and did not let single drop of blood to fall on the ground.

After killing all the demons, lord Shiva lifted Andhak with his trident and hanged him between the earth and sky. Andhak remained there for a very long period of time, bearing the heat of the sun and the showers of rain. But he remained alive. Ultimately he had to take the refuge of Lord Shiva, to save his life. Lord Shiva became pleased by his eulogy and made him his 'Ganadhees' (leader of all the Ganas).

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When lord Shiva swallowed up Shukracharya, he became very restless and started to find out a way through which he could come out from Shiva's stomach. But all of his efforts went in vain. Finding no other option, he started to chant the name of lord Shiva. His chantings

continued for one hundred years. By the blessings of Shiva, he came out from Shiva's stomach through the ejaculated semen.

After coming out, Shukraharya eulogized Lord Shiva. Shiva became pleased with him and showered him with affection just like his own son. After being blessed Shukracharya went and rejoined the army of the demons.

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KILLING OF GAJASUR

Goddess Durga had killed the demon Mahishasur, who used to torment the deities. Gajasur was the son of Mahishasur. To avenge his father's

death, Gajasur did a tremendous penance to please lord Brahma.

Lord Brahma appeared before him and asked him to demand any boon. Gajasur said- "O Lord! Even a 'Jeetendriya' (one who has full control over his senses) should not be able to kill me,"

Lord Brahma blessed him by saying - 'So be it'. Gradually, Gajasur atrocities crossed all limits. He became the lord of all the three worlds. He forced even the deities to worship him. He used to torment the brahmins and the other religious people.

One day Gajasur arrived at Kashi and started tormenting the people living over there. The deities came to lord Shiva and requested him to rescue Kashi by killing Gajasur.

Lord Shiva came to Kashi and fought a battle with Gajasur. He killed Gajasur with this trident. At the time of his death, Gajasur eulogized Lord Shiva and requested him to put his (Gajasur's) skin on his (Shiva's) body.

Lord Shiva agreed to fulfill his wish. At the spot where, Gajasur was killed a famous Shivalinga by the name of Krittivaseshwar was constructed as per the own wish of lord Shiva.

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KILLING OF NIRHADDAITYA

Diti was filled with grief when she came to known about her son's (Hiranyaksha) death, who was killed by lord Vishnu.

Nirhaddaitya, who was the maternal uncle of Prahlada consoled her an promised to avenge the death of Hiranyaksha. He thought to destroy the vedic religion. According to him the deities derived their strength and power from this very vedic religion. He planned to eliminate the priestly class-brahmins, so that the chances of 'Yagyas' being performed becomes extinct and the deities were starved to such an extent that they became weak and powerless. Thinking that then it would not be very difficult to kill the 'weak' deities.

Nirhaddaitya arrived at Kashi to execute his plan, which during those time was the chief center of the brahmins. He attained the form of a tiger and stationed himself in a nearby forest. He used to kill any brahmin who used to come over there to collect 'Kusha' grass and fuel. With the help of his illusionary powers he used to attain the form of a hermit during the daytime and lived among them. But during the night, he used to enter into the houses of the brahmins in the form of a tiger and used to devour them.

On one night of Shivaratri, when a brahmin was busy worshipping Lord Shiva, Niraddaitya who was in the form of a tiger entered the temple. But, since the brahmin was engaged in the worship of Lord Shiva, he could not harm the brahmin. Lord Shiva emerged from the very Shivalinga, which the brahmin was worshipping and punched the demon with his clenched fist, so hard that he died.

KILLING OF NIRHADDAITYA

Diti was filled with grief when she came to known about her son's (Hiranyaksha) death, who was killed by lord Vishnu.

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KILLING OF VIDAL AND UTPAL

Long long ago there used to live two demons by the names of Vidul and Utpal. Both of them did a tremendous penance to please lord Brahma.

After being blessed by lord Brahma, they became very arrogant and started tormenting the deities and the brahmins.

The deities went to lord Brahma and sought his help. Lord Brahma told them that both the demons would be killed by goddess Parvati very soon. He also instructed the deities to eulogize Shiva and Parvati to seek their blessings. The deities went back and started eulogizing Shiva and Parvati.

One fateful day, Vidal and Utpal arrived at the place where goddess Parvati was having amusements with her companions. Vidal and Utpal had disguised themselves as the ganas of Shiva. Lord Shiva recognized the real identity of the demons. He signaled towards Parvati pointing towards the demons. Parvati who was playing with a ball with her companions, understood what lord Shiva meant to say. She hit both of them with the ball, with such force that both the demons died on the spot. The ball then fell down on the ground and transformed into a Shivalinga which became as 'Kandukeshwar'. The deities became very pleased at the death of Vidal and Utpal.

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PART THREE SHATRUDRA SAMHITA

The sages requested Suta to describe about the different incarnations of Lord Shiva. Suta told them that, although Lord Shiva took many

incarnations but five of his incarnations were very important- Sadhojat Namadeva, Tat Purusha, Aghoresh and Ishan.

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FIVE SHIVA INCARNATIONS

1) SADHOJAT:-Lord Shiva took his first incarnation from the physique incarnation from the physique of Lord Brahma, who was engrossed in his deep state of meditation, during the nineteenth Kalpa named Shweta Lohit. Lord Brahma gave him the name Sadhojat and eulogized him. Later on, from the physique of Sadhojat four of his disciple manifested, whose names were Sunand, Nandan, Vishwanandan and Upanandan. All the four disciples were of fair complexion. Lord Shiva blessed Brahma and empowered him to do creation.

2) NAMDEVA:- During the twentieth Kalpa named 'Rakta' the complexion of lord Brahma turned red, while he was engrossed in his meditative state. From his body manifested an entity who also was of red complexion. Lord Brahma named him Namadeva considering him to be the incarnation of lord Shiva and eulogized him. Later on four sons were bom to Namadeva, whose names were Viraj, Viwah, Vishok and Vishwabhawan. All of them were of red complexion just like their father Namadeva.

Namdeva Shiva along with his virtuous progenies blessed lord Brahma with the power of creation.

3) TAT PURUSHA:- The twenty-first Kalpa on the earth was known as 'Peetavasa'. It was named so because of the apparel of lord Brahma which were of yellow colours. Lord Brahma's prayer resulted into the manifestation of an effulgent entity. Considering this entity as Lord Shiva, Lord Brahma started chanting the mantras of Shiva Gayatri. After the chantings of the mantras, numerous entities manifested who had put on apparels of yellow colour on their body. This way the third incarnation of Shiva popularly known as Tat Purusha manifested.

4) GHORESH:- After the Peetavasa Kalpa came the Shiva Kalpa. A black complexioned manifested while Lord Brahma was engrossed in his deep meditative state. Lord Brahma considering this entity as Aghor Shiva started eulogizing him. Lord Brahma's eulogization resulted into the manifestation of four more entities who had the same black complexion as that of 'Aghor Shiva'. Their names were Krishna, Krishnashikha, Krishnamukha and Krishnakanthdhari. Ghor Shiva along with those four entities blessed lord Brahma with the power of creation.

5) ISHAN- During the Kalpa named Vishwaroop, manifestations of Saraswati and Ishan Shiva took place. Lord Brahma eulogized Ishan Shiva after which four divine entities named Jati, Mundi, Shikhandi and Ardhamundi manifested from Ishan Shiva. All of them blessed lord Brahma with the power of creation.

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EIGHT IDOLS OF SHIVA

After describing about the five chief incarnations of lord Shiva, Suta explained about the eight famous idols of lord Shiva- Sharva, Bhava,

Rudra, Ugra, Bhima, Pashupati, Ishan and Mahadeva. These eight idols of Shiva symbolizes the eight natural elements which help in the process of creation, nurturement and annihilation. These eight natural elements are Land, water, fire, air, sky, supreme soul (Kshetragya), Sun and the moon. Being established in these eight idols, Shiva controls the whole world.

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SHIVA AS ARDHANARISHWAR

Once upon a time Lord Brahma, not seeing an expansion in his creation became very worried. A heavenly voice instructed him to commence

creation with the help of copulative activities. But since all the incarnation of Shiva had been males till then, therefore lord Brahma was finding it impossible.

Lord Brahma contemplated on the form of Shiva and Shakti. Lord Shiva became very pleased with him and appeared in his form of 'Ardhanarishwar (half male half female). Left side of his body resembled like a woman while the right side appeared like a man. Lord Brahma worshipped this form of Shiva.

Lord Shiva then separated the feminine part of his body and thus manifested mother Shakti. Lord Brahma worshipped her and requested to bestow such power by which he could create a woman.

Goddess Shakti blessed him by saying - 'So be it' and vanished. This way Lord Brahma became capable of commencing copulative creation.

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VARIOUS INCARNATION OF VYASA AND LORD SHIVA

During the 'Varaha' Kalpa of the Seventh 'Manvantar' lord Vishnu illuminated all the three world by his divine presence. This seventh

Manvantara consisted of four yugas which repeated themselves in a cyclic way for twelve times.

The first dwapar of this seventh manvantar saw the manifestation of lord Shiva for the welfare of the brahmins. When Kali Yuga arrived Lord Shiva again manifested himself along with goddess Shakti and was known as Mahamuni Shweta. Lord Brahma had the priviledge of becoming his disciple.

During the second dwapar, sage Vyasa existed as Satya, Prajapati and Lord Shiva became famous as 'Sutar'. Lord Shiva in his incarnation of Sutra had many disciples among whom Dundubhi' was very famous.

During the third dwapar sage Vyasa took his incarnation as Bhargava and lord Shiva became famous as Daman. Lord Shiva in his incarnation as Daman had four disciples among whom Vishoka was very famous. When Kali Yuga arrived after this third dwapar. Lord Shiva along with his Disciples helped Sage Vyasa.

During the fourth Dwapar Sage Vyasa took his incarnation as Angira and Lord Shiva as 'Suhotra'. Even in this incarnation Lord Shiva had four disciples among whom Sumukh was very famous. Lord Shiva along with his disciples helped Angira.

During the fifth dwapar sage Vyasa took incarnation as Savita and Lord Shiva as 'Kanka' who was very famous for his tremendous austerities. Kanka had four disciples among whom Sanak was very famous.

During the sixth dwapar sage Vyasa took incarnation as Mrityu and Lord Shiva as 'Lokakshi'. Lokakshi had four disciples among whom Sudhama was very prominent.

During the seventh dwapar sage Vyasa manifested himself as Indra and Lord Shiva as Jaigisatya. Jaigisatya had four disciples among whom Saraswat was very prominent.

During the eighth dwapar sage Vyasa took incarnation as Vashishtha and Lord Shiva as Dadhivahan. Dadhivahan had four disciples among whom Kapila was very famous.

During the nineth dwapar sage Vyasa took incarnation as Saraswat and Lord Shiva as 'Rishabh'. Lord Shiva in his incarnation as Rishabhdeva had four disciples among whom Parashar was very famous.

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NANDIKESHWAR

While describing about the incarnation of Nandikeshwar Suta says-

Sage Shilad did a tremendous penance to please lord Shiva with an aspiration to have a son. Lord Shiva appeared before him and asked him to demand any boon he wished.

Sage Shilad expressed his desire of having a son who is not bom from a physical body and who is proficient in all the sriptural knowledges. Lord Shiva blessed him by saying - 'So be it'.

Sage Shilad then returned to his hermitage and performed a 'Yagya'. From the yagya-kunda appeared a child who possessed four arms and three eyes. Sage Shilad was very pleased to see that child. The birth of the child was celebrated with great fanfare. Lord Shiva and Parvati arrived to bless the child.

The child was named Nandi as his birth had given immense joy (ananda) to sage Shilad. Later on Nandi lived with his father like any other normal child and was brought up with great love and care. He became proficient in all the scriptures within seven years.

Being inspired by lord Shiva, two brahmins came to sage Shilad and informed him that after one year Nandi would be no more. Sage Shilad became extremely sad.

Seeing his father in his sorrowful mood, Nandi consoled him and later on went to do penance. His tremendous penance pleased Lord Shiva and Parvati and both of them appeared before him. Lord Shiva blessed him and said- "You are just like me, so you will never die".

Lord Shiva also gave one of his garlands to him. As soon as Nandi wore that garland he imbibed all the qualities of lord Shiva. After that Lord Shiva took out some water from his locks of hair and sprinkled on him, as a result of which five rivers came into existence. These five rivers were later on came to be known as Panchanad. Lord Shiva then made him the leader of all his ganas.

Later on goddess Parvati took Nandi under her guidance and considered

him just like her own son. Nandi was married to Suyasha- the daughter of Marut. Ultimately all of them accompanied lord Shiva to his abode.

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BHAIRAV GETS LIBERATED FROM HIS SIN

Bhairav who was created by lord Shiva from his third eye, had severed one of the five heads of Lord Brahma on the instruction of lord Shiva. Now Brahma was left with only four heads. Carrying the skull of Brahma in his hand, Bhairava started wandering in all the three worlds. To atone his sin of severing the head of lord Brahma, he was begging alms.

Bhairav reached Vishnuloka where he was welcomed warm heartedly by lord Vishnu and Lakshmi. Goddess Lakshmi dropped the learning (Vidya) named Manorath (by which all the wishes could be fulfilled) in the begging bowl (Skull) of Bhariav. Bhairav became extremely happy by this gift. Lord Shiva had created a oegrass named 'Brahmahatya' and had instructed Bhairav to reach Kashi, before her. According to lord Shiva this way the sin committed by Bhairav could successfully atoned.

After being blessed by goddess Lakshmi, Bhairav took the permission of Lord Vishnu and proceeded towards Kashi. After his departure asked Brahmahatya to stop chasing Bhairav. But she refused saying that she was just following the instruction of Lord Shiva.

When Bhairav reached Kashi, Brahmahatya too came near the outskirts of the city, but could not enter it because of Lord Shiva's power instead she entered in to the netherworld (Patal loka). As soon as Bhairav had entered Kashi. The begging-bowl (skull) fell on the ground and thus Bhairav got liberated from his sins. Bhairav was extremely relieved. The place where the skull of Brahma had fallen, later on became as Kapal mochan- the most sacred place of pilgrimage.

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SHIVA TAKES INCARNATION AS SHARABH

While describing about the incarnation of Sharabh Suta told sages-

"When Vishnu took his incarnation of Nrisimha to kill the demon king Hiranyakashipu, his anger could not be subdued even after the killing of Hiranyakashipu. His anger had frightened all the three worlds. Lord Brahma sent Prahlada to Nrisimha so that his anger gets cool down. Prahlada prayed to Nrisimha. Nrisimha took him in his embrace but still his anger was not subdued."

"All the deities went to lord Shiva and requested to him to cool down Vishnu's anger. Lord Shiva then sent Bhairav and Veerbhadra to Nrisimha. When Veerbhadra politely requested Nrisimha to cool down, he (Nrisimha) tried to pounce on him (Veerbhadra). Right then Lord Shiva appeared in his most devastating form. He was looking frightening in his giant form and with thousands of hand. His appearance was resembling a huge cannibal bird. Lord Shiva injured Nrisimha with his giant wings and after carrying Lord Vishnu in his giant wings and after carrying lord Vishnu in his arms he flew in the sky. Lord Vishnu was so frightened that he became unconscious."

"After regarding his consciousness Lord Nrisimha appeared in his form of Lord Vishnu and eulogized Shiva, which made lord Shiva very pleased. Lord Shiva wore the head of Nrisimha with the garland of skull in his neck. The remaining body was carried by Veerbhadra and abandoned at a mountain."

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VISHWANAR RECEIVES BOON FROM SHIVA

Once upon a time, there used to live a brahmin named Vishwanar who was a great devotee of lord Shiva. Shuchismati was his wife who was a

devout wife. Being pleased by her sense of dutifulness, Vishwanar tried to reward his wife.

Shuchismati expressed her desire of having a son just like lord Shiva. Vishwanar went to Kashi to please Lord Shiva by his penance. He worshipped Vishveshwar linga with supreme devotion. Lord Shiva became very pleased by his devotion and he appeared before Vishwanar from the Shivalinga. When Vishwanar expressed his desire, lord Shiva agreed to take birth as his Son. Vishwanar came back to his house happily.

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SHIVA'S INCARNATION AS GRIHAPATI

In due course of time, Shuchismati became pregnant and gave birth to a beautiful child. The whole family celebrated the birth of the child. The

whole family celebrated the birth of the child. The name giving ceremony of that child was attended by all the deities and sages including lord Shiva and Parvati. Lord Brahma named the child as Grihapati. When Grihapati attained the age of five, his sacred thread ceremony was performed. Within a year he became proficient in all the Vedas and other sacred texts.

When Grihapati attained the age of nine, Narada came and informed Vishwanar that death of Grihapati was imminent because of the evil effects of the planetary combinations. Vishwanar and Shuchismati were saddened and started crying.

Grihapati then consoled his parents and proceeded towards Kashi to do penance so that the 'death' could be conqured. Grihapati commenced his penance at Kashi. The deity Indra arrived there and requested him to demand anything he wished but Grihapati refused. Indra became furious and tried to attack him with his weapon-Vajra. Grihapati was very terrified.

Right then Lord Shiva appeared and Indra had to retreat from the scene. Lord Shiva blessed Grihapati by saying - "What to say about this lightning - Vajra, even Kalvajra would not be able to kill you."

Grihapati became very pleased. The Shivalinga which he worshipped, later on became famous as 'Agnishwar linga. Lord Shiva made Grihapati the lord of all the directions.

SHIVA'S INCARNATION AS GRIHAPATI

In due course of time, Shuchismati became pregnant and gave birth to a beautiful child. The whole family celebrated the birth of the child. The whole family celebrated the birth of the child. The name giving ceremony of that child was attended by all the deities and sages including lord Shiva and Parvati. Lord Brahma named the child as Grihapati. When Grihapati attained the age of five, his sacred thread ceremony was performed. Within a year he became proficient in all the Vedas and other sacred texts.

When Grihapati attained the age of nine, Narada came and informed Vishwanar that death of Grihapati was imminent because of the evil effects of the planetary combinations. Vishwanar and Shuchismati were saddened and started crying.

Grihapati then consoled his parents and proceeded towards Kashi to do penance so that the 'death' could be conqured. Grihapati commenced his penance at Kashi. The deity Indra arrived there and requested him to demand anything he wished but Grihapati refused. Indra became furious and tried to attack him with his weapon-Vajra. Grihapati was very terrified.

Right then Lord Shiva appeared and Indra had to retreat from the scene. Lord Shiva blessed Grihapati by saying - "What to say about this lightning - Vajra, even Kalvajra would not be able to kill you."

Grihapati became very pleased. The Shivalinga which he worshipped, later on became famous as 'Agnishwar linga. Lord Shiva made Grihapati the lord of all the directions.

LORD SHIVA'S INCARNTION AS YAKSHESHWAR

During the time when ocean was being churned first of all poison appeared from it. The deities were very terrified to see the tremendous

heat it generated. They went to lord Shiva and requested to protect them from the heat of that poison. Lord Shiva drank all the poison but did not let it pass down his throat.

After the poison, Nectar appeared from the ocean, which was drunk by the deities. The demons too wanted to drink the nectar, so a tremendous battle ensued between them and the deities. The deities became victorious in this battle because they had become immortal due to the effect of the Nectar. This victory made the deities very arrogant.

Lord Shiva was very concerned about their arrogant nature. He went to them in the guise of a Yaksha. He asked as to what was it that had made them so arrogant. The deities replied that their arrogance stemmed from victory over the demons. Lord Shiva who was disguised as Yaksha replied- "Your pride is based on false notion, because you did not achieve victory due to somebody's grace and blessing."

The deities disagreed with him. Lord Shiva then asked them to cut the grass if they considered themselves so mighty. He then kept a grass leaf in front of them. Each of the deities tried to cut that grass with their respective weapons but remained unsuccessful in their attempts. They were all amazed. Suddenly a heavenly voice was heard which said that the Yaksha was none other than Lord Shiva himself. The deities realized their mistakes. They apologized to lord Shiva. After vanquishing the false pride of the deities lord Shiva disappeared.

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TEN INCARNATIONS OF SHIVA AND SHAKTI

Describing about the ten incarnations and their corresponding power (Shakti), Suta said-

The first incarnation of lord Shiva was as Mahakal and his Shakti was called Mahakali. Lord Shiva took his second incarnation as Tar and his Shakti was called 'Tara'. The third incarnation of Lord Shiva was as Bhuvaneshwar and his Shakti was called 'Bhuvaneshwari'. Lord Shiva took his fourth incarnation as 'Shodash' who was also known as 'Srividdyesh' and his Shakti was called 'Shodashi' or 'Sri'.

Lord Shiva took his fifth incarnation as Bhairav and his Shakti was called 'Bhairavi'. The sixth incarnation of Lord Shiva is famous as 'Chhinamastak' and his Shakti by the name of 'Chhinamasta. Lord Shiva took his seventh incarnation as 'Dhoomvan' and his Shakti was known as 'Dhoomvati. The eighth incarnation was as Baglamukh and his Shakti as Baglamukhi. The nineth incarnation of lord Shiva became famous as Matang and his Shakti as 'Matangi'. Lord Shiva took his tenth incarnation as 'Kamal' and his Shakti as Kamala. If these ten incarnations of Shiva are worshipped along with his ten Mahavidyas then a man attains salvation.

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THE ORIGIN OF ELEVEN RUDRAS

Once, the deities went to sage Kashyapa after being tormented by the demons. They complained to him about the misdeeds of the demons, who

also happened to be their step brothers. Sage Kashyapa became extremely furious, when he heard about the misdeeds of his sons - the demons. To protect the deities from his sons, he commenced a penance to please lord Shiva.

Lord Shiva became very pleased by his penance and appeared before him. He asked Kashyapa to demand anything he wished. Kashyapa then requested Lord Shiva to take birth as his son and destroy the demons. Lord Shiva blessed him and said - 'So be it'.

Lord Shiva, later on took birth as eleven Rudras from the womb of his wife Surabhi. The name of these eleven rudras were as follows:-

1) Kapali, 2) Pingal, 3) Bheem, 4) Virupaksha, 5) Vilohit, 6) Shastra, 7) Ajapad, 8)Ahirbudhnya, 9) Shambhu, 10) Chand and 11) Bhav.

These eleven Rudras fought battles with the demons and killed them. The deities were relieved after the death of the demons. They worshipped these eleven rudras to express their gratitude and indebtedness.

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SHIVA'S INCARNATION AS DURVASA

Describing about the Lord Shiva's incarnation as Durvasa, Suta told the deities:- "once Atri - the manasputra of lord Brahma went to do penance

at the bank of the river Nivindhya which flew bythe foothills of Trayakshakul mountain as per the instructions of Lord Brahma himself. He commenced doing a tremendous penance. The effects of his penance was such that devastating flames of fire manifested from his head. The fire spread in all the three world in no time. The deities were terrified by the death and destruction caused by the fire in all the three worlds. They went to lord Brahma to seek his help. Lord Brahma took them to lord Vishnu and revealed to him about the destruction caused by the fire. All of them went to lord Shiva and told him everything.

Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva went to Atri and blessed him. Atri recognized them. He eulogized them. Later on Atri's wife Anusuya gave birth to three sons, who in fact were the incarnations of Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. Lord Brahma incarnation as the Moon, Lord Vishnu as Dutt and Shiva took incarnation as Durvasa.

Durvasa had tested the religiousness and virtuosity of numerous people. He had also tested the religiousness of king Ambareesh, who ruled over 'Saptadweepa'. Once king Ambareesh had observed a fast on 'Ekadashi'. Next day, when he was about to break his fast sage Durvasa arrived accompanied by his large number of disciples.

Durvasa was very furious with king Ambareesh. He said-

"You had invited me for this particular, but you have also insulted me by breaking the fast by drinking water in my absence."

Sage Durvasa would have burnt king Ambareesh to ashes by his curse, had not Sudarshan-the weapon of Vishnu came to his rescue. Sudarshan then tried to burn sage Durvasa when suddenly a heavenly voice was heard from the sky which said-

"Durvasa is no one but the incarnation of lord Shiva himself." Hearing this Sudarshan's anger was pacified. King Ambareesh then begged his forgiveness from sage Durvasa.

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INCARNATION OF HANUMAN

Lord Shiva was so infatuated by the appearance of lord Vishnu in his form of Mohini roopa that his semen was released on the ground. This

semen was established by the Saptarishis in the womb of Anjani, with the permission of lord Shiva himself.

In this way was born the mighty Hanuman. Once, during his childhood Hanuman had swallowed the Sun, which he released only after the deities prayed to him. The sun accepted him as his disciple and made him proficient in all the learning's. He started living with Sugriva as per the instructions of his teacher - the Sun.

During the time of Sri Rama's exile, Sugriva developed friendship with him with the help of Hanuman. Hanuman helped Sri Rama in finding the whereabouts of Sita, who had been abducted by the demon king Ravana. He took a giant leap and jumped across the ocean. He went to Ashok-Vatika where Ravana had kept Sita. He gave Sri Rama's ring to her and consoled her by saying that very soon Sri Rama was going to arrive and release her from Ravana's captivity. He also burnt the whole Lanka by his burning tail and returned to Sri Rama to give him Sita's news while the battle was fought between Sri Rama and Ravana Lakshmana got seriously injured and became unconscious. Hanuman saves his life by bringing the whole of mountain, upon which the herb Sanjivani grew.

Being present at the service of Sri Rama, Hanuman performed his duties marvelously. Worship of Hanuman helps a man to become free from all kinds of problems, diseases and hurdles etc.

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SHIVA'S INCARNATION AS MAHESH

Once, Bhairav who was entrusted with the job of a doorkeeper became so infatuated with Parvati's beauty that he tried to prevent her from going

outside.

Parvati became furious and cursed him to be born as a mortal man on the earth. Bhairav became very sad but now the damage had been already done. Bhairav later on appeared in the form of a man named 'Vetal'.

Vetal prayed to lord Shiva who took his incarnation as Mahesh and goddess Parvati as Girija.

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LORD VISHNU CREATES TURBULENCES

After the churning of the ocean had been accomplished, numerous things had emerged out from the ocean. Jewels, Moon, Lakshmi, Poison,

Uchchaishrava horse, Airavat elephant, Vessel containing Nectar were some of the things which emerged out from the ocean after the churning.

A tremendous battle was fought between the deities and the demons to have control over the vessel containing Nectar. The demons had snatched that vessel from the deities.

By the divine inspiration of lord Shiva, Vishnu appeared in the form of Mohini the enchanting beauty. He successfully recovered that vessel from the control of the demons.

To distract the attention of the demons from the nectar, lord Vishnu created numerous enchanting beauties. When the demons saw them, they forcibly carried these enchanting beauties to their abode, the Nether world. After that they again returned to take control of the Nectar.

By that time, Vishnu had made the deities drink all the nectar. When the demons came to know about this, they became very furious and attacked the deities. A tremendous battle ensured between both the sides. Ultimately the demons got defeated. To save their lives the demon ran towards their abode. Lord Vishnu chased the demons and entered the Netherland. He killed all the demons.

Lord Vishnu then saw those enchanting beauties who had been abducted by the demons. Ironically, lord Vishnu got infatuated by their beauty-who were his own creation. Lord Vishnu remained there for a long time.

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SHIVA'S INCARNATION AS VRISHABH

During his stay in the Netherland, many sons were born to Lord Vishnu, who were very wicked and cruel. These sons of lord Vishnu started

tormenting the inhabitants of all the three world. All the deities and the sages went to lord Shiva to take his help. They requested him to kill the cruel sons of Vishnu and reestablish him (lord Vishnu) in his own abode, which he had abandoned for the Nether world.

Lord Shiva went to the Netherworld in the form of an Ox (Vrishabh). He killed all the sons of lord Vishnu with his sharp horns. Seeing the death of his sons, lord Vishnu came forward to fight him. He attacked lord Shiva with his various weapons, but lord Shiva remained harmless. Ultimately lord Vishnu was able to recognise him. He eulogized lord Shiva.

Lord Shiva then requested him to return back to Vishnuloka, he accepted. Lord Vishnu left his 'Sudarshan chakra' in the Netherworld and went to his own abode, where lord Shiva presented him a new Sudarshan chakra.

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During his stay in the Netherland, many sons were born to Lord Vishnu, who were very wicked and cruel. These sons of lord Vishnu started tormenting the inhabitants of all the three world. All the deities and the sages went to lord Shiva to take his help. They requested him to kill the cruel sons of Vishnu and reestablish him (lord Vishnu) in his own abode, which he had abandoned for the Nether world.

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KILLING OF VRITTRASUR

Once, when the deities were defeated by Vrittrasur, they went to lord Brahma after hiding their weapons in the hermitage of sage Dadhichi.

They requested lord Brahma to reveal about the means, how vrittrasur could be killed.

Lord Brahma advised the deities to male a weapon named Vajra from the bones of sages Dadhichi, as Dadhichi's bones were even harder than the Vajra of Indra by the blessings of lord Shiva.

All the deities then went to the hermitage of Dadhichi in the leadership of Brihaspati. On being enquired about the purpose of their visit, Indra said that he wanted his bones so that a weapon could be made out of it.

Dadhichi gave up his life by his yogic power. Indra then instructed Kamdhenu to extract the bones from the dead body of Dadhichi. The bones were on given to 'Twashta' to construct the weapon-Vajra. Twashta took the weapons to Vishwakarma who at last constructed the Vajra.

Indra killed Vrittrasur with this weapon. When Suvarcha - the wife of Dadhichi came to know about the cunning deeds of the deities, she cursed them to become animals.

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SHIVA'S INCARNATION AS YATINATH

There used to live a bheel named Ahuk of the Arbudachal mountain. His wife was Ahuka. Both of them were supreme devotee of lord Shiva.

Once, lord Shiva wanting to test their devotion, appeared before them disguised a hermit. Ahuk honored his guest and treated him very well. Lord Shiva then requested him to give shelter for the whole night. Ahuk expressed his inability as he had a very small hut, in which only two people could be accommodate at a time.

But his wife intervened and requested Ahuk to sleep outside the hut with his arms, as it would be inappropriate on their part to miss this chance of proving their hospitality.

The hermit, who in reality was lord Shiva slept with Ahuk's wife inside the hut, while Ahuk himself slept outside the hut. Unfortunately Ahuk was killed by a wild animal while he was asleep.

In the morning when lord Shiva found that Ahuk had died, his heart was filled with grief. But Ahuka consoled him by saying that she was proud of her husband as he had given up his life for a noble cause. Naturally she was very much saddened by her husband's death so she decided to give up her life by jumping into the burning pyre.

Right then lord Shiva appeared in his real form and blessed her by saying-

"In his next birth your husband would take birth in a royal family. He would become famous as Nala and you would be bom as Damayanti to king Bhima of Vidarbha. I would myself appear in the form of a swan and help both of you to unite. After enjoying all the pleasures of this world both of you would attain to may abode.

After saying thus, lord Shiva established himself as immovable Shivalinga, which later on became famous as Achaleshwar linga.

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SHIVA'S INCARNATION AS 'KRISHNA DARSHAN'

King Nabhag was born in the nineth geneology of Shradhadeva who himself was a descendant of Ikshavaku. Nabhag was the grandfather of

Ambareesh. During his childhood Nabhag left his home for 'gurukula to get education. In his absence his brothers got the wealth of the kingdom distributed among themselves.

When Nabhag returned home after the completion of his education, he demanded his share of wealth from his brothers. His brothers told him that they had forgotten to fix his share as he was absent at the time when wealth was being distributed. They advised him to go and meet their father.

Nabhag went to his father and made the same request. His father advised him to go to sage Angiras who was trying to accomplish a yagya, but was not being able to accomplish it because of his attachment.

"Go and try to eliminate his attachment by your discourses. This way sage Angiras on being pleased with you would give all the wealth which remains after the completion of the yagya." said his father.

Nabhag did the same. He went to the place where sage Angiras was performing his yagya. He preached sage Angiras on the virtues of Religiousness. As a result he became free from all sorts of attachments and the yagya was successfully accomplished.

Sage Angiras was very pleased by Nabhag's knowledge of religion. He gave all the remaining wealth of the yagya to Nabhag. Just then lord Shiva arrived there in his incarnation of Krishna darshan and tried to prevent sage Angiras from donating the wealth to Nabhag, instead he staked his own claim.

Nabhag told lord Shiva that, since the wealth was given to him by sage Angiras himself, it naturally belonged to him. Lord Shiva then sent Nabhag to his father Shradhadev to know about his opinion. Nabhag went to Shradha deva who revealed to him that the person who was staking his claims on the wealth was none other then lord Shiva. He also told him that whatever remained after the accomplishment of the yagya belongs to lord Shiva only.

Nabhag was now satisfied. He went back to lord Shiva and narrated everything what his father had said. He then eulogized and worshipped lord Shiva. Lord Shiva blessed him which helped Nabhag to attain

salvation.

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"Go and try to eliminate his attachment by your discourses. This way sage Angiras on being pleased with you would give all the wealth which remains after the completion of the yagya." said his father.

Nabhag did the same. He went to the place where sage Angiras was performing his yagya. He preached sage Angiras on the virtues of Religiousness. As a result he became free from all sorts of attachments and the yagya was successfully accomplished.

Sage Angiras was very pleased by Nabhag's knowledge of religion. He gave all the remaining wealth of the yagya to Nabhag. Just then lord Shiva arrived there in his incarnation of Krishna darshan and tried to prevent sage Angiras from donating the wealth to Nabhag, instead he staked his own claim.

Nabhag told lord Shiva that, since the wealth was given to him by sage Angiras himself, it naturally belonged to him. Lord Shiva then sent Nabhag to his father Shradhadev to know about his opinion. Nabhag went to Shradha deva who revealed to him that the person who was staking his claims on the wealth was none other then lord Shiva. He also told him that whatever remained after the accomplishment of the yagya belongs to lord Shiva only.

Nabhag was now satisfied. He went back to lord Shiva and narrated everything what his father had said. He then eulogized and worshipped lord Shiva. Lord Shiva blessed him which helped Nabhag to attain salvation.

LORD SHIVA APPEARS AS A BEGGAR

There was a king named Satyarath who ruled over Vidarbha. Once he was attacked by a neighbouring king. Satyarath was killed in that battle. His wife somehow managed to save her life by hiding in a forest. The queen was pregnant at that time.

At the shore of a pond she gave birth to a child. She was feeling thirsty, so she went into the pond to quench her thirst. Unfortunately she was killed by a crocodile who used to live in that pond.

The hungry child started crying. A beggar woman arrived there with her one year old child. Though her heart was filled with compassion seeing the hungry child cry but still she was hesitating to take him in her lap.

Right then lord Shiva appeared as a beggar and advised her to bring up the orphan child. The beggar woman asked about the origin of the child. Lord Shiva told her that the father of this child Satyarath in his previous life had left the pradoshavrata incomplete. He had also ordered his men to severe the head of his enemy. After this, he had broken his fast in his impure state, without taking a bath.

As a result, Satyarath met a premature-death in his next life. The mother of this orphan child too committed a sin by deceitfully getting the co-wife of her husband killed. As a result she was devoured by a crocodile in her next life.

Describing about the child lord Shiva said-

"This child was brahmin by birth in his previous life, but still he never engaged himself in any religious or virtuous deeds. So in his next life, though he was born in a royal family, still he remained poor. You must take this child under your control and after his sacred-thread ceremony gets accomplished, you must engage him in my (Shiva's) devotion. If you don't obey my command then it would not be good for the welfare of your own child."

After saying like this lord Shiva disappeared. The beggar woman took that child to her house and brought him up with great love and care. When he grew up his sacred-thread ceremony was performed and then he was initiated into the worship of lord Shiva.

By the blessing of lord Shiva, Satyarath's son formed a pot full of gold while he was taking both in a pond. Now the beggar family became very rich. Once again when he had gone to a forest he met a 'gandharva' princess to whom he ultimately got married. This way he became a king. He lived happily with his mother and his brother.

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LORD SHIVA APPEARS IN THE GUISE OF INDRA (SURESHWAR)

Upamanyu, the son of sage Vyaghrapad, was brought up in his maternal uncle's home since his childhood. One day Upanyu was very hungry. His

mother gave him milk to drink which was not enough to satisfy his hunger. He demanded more and started crying. His mother mined some wheat flour in the water and gave him to drink as there was no milk left in the house. Upamanyu finding the taste different told his mother that it was not milk but something else. He again started crying.

His mother told him that if he wanted milk then he should worship lord Shiva as he only was capable of making the milk available. Upamanyu proceeded towards the Himalaya and started doing penance to please lord Shiva- continuously chanting the mantra Om Namah Shivay. His penance generated so much of heat that all the three worlds started burning.

To test his devotion, Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati appeared before him disguised as Indra and Indrani respectively. Both of them told Upamanyu to stop doing penance. They said-

"We Indra and Indrani are extremely pleased by your devotion. Stop worshipping Shiva. We will fulfill all your desires."

Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati did not stop at this. They even cursed Shiva. Upamanyu became very furious and got up to attack the abuser Indra.

Shiva and Parvati were satisfied by his total dedication and devotion. They revealed their real identity and blessed him. Shiva promised Upamanyu that he would be present in the vicinity of his hermitage along with Parvati forever.

Upamanyu returned back to his home and narrated the whole story to his mother who was very pleased. Lord Shiva got the name 'Sureshwar' because he appeared in the guise of Indra.

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SAGE VYASA ADVISES THE PANDAVAS TO WORSHIP SHIVA

After loosing their whole kingdom to Duryodhan in the gamble, Pandavas went to the dwait forest accompanied by Draupadi. They started living in

a place which was donated by Velotra Sun.

Duryodhan instigated sage Durvasa to torment the Pandavas. Sage Durvasa went to the place where Pandavas were staying, accompanied by thousands of his disciples. He demanded food from the Pandavas. How could have the Pandavas satiated from the hunger of thousands of people. Lord Krishna came to their rescue and saved them from being disagraced. As a result Durvasa and his disciples went back satisfied.

Lord Krishna advised the Pandavas to worship lord Shiva, but they neglected that advice. As a result their sufferings increased in magnitude. One day sage Vyasa arrived there. The Pandavas gave a rousing reception. Considering Arjuna to be the most capable among the Pandavas, Vyasa taught him the method of doing 'Parthiva' worship. Later on Arjuna went to the Indrakeel mountain to please Indra by his penance. Sage Vyasa preached Yudhisthira to remain firm on his virtuously and religiousness.

Arj una's penance generated so much of heat that all the living creature of the three worlds were unable to bear its scorching heat. All the living creatures of the three worlds went to Indra to seek his help.

Indra went to Arjuna in the guise of a celibate and asked about the purpose for which he was doing penance. Arjuna told him that he wanted to defeat the Kauravas. Indra then told Arjuna that it was not in his capacity to help him achieve victory over the Kauravas, because of Aswatthama who was a partial incarnation of lord Shiva.

Indra advised Arjuna to please lord Shiva by his penance so that his wishes could be fulfilled. Indra then entrusted some of his men, the job of Arjuna's security and went back to his abode. Arjuna commenced his penance to please lord Shiva.

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LORD SHIVA APPEARS IN GUISE OF 'KIRAT AND BLESSES ARJUNA

Arjuna did a tremendous penance by standing only on one leg and concentrating his gaze upon the blazing sun. The deities became very

impressed by Arjuna's penance. They went to lord Shiva and requested him to bless Arjuna. Lord Shiva accepted their request.

Duryodhan had sent a demon named Mooka to kill Arjuna. Mooka had disguised himself as a boar. Arjuna was engrossed in his meditation, when suddenly his concentration got disturbed by a loud noise. He opened his eyes and saw Mooka being chased by a band of Kirats. In fact it was none other than Shiva who had appeared in the guise of Kirat.

Both Arjuna and Lord Shiva struck the boar with their respective arrows at the same time. As a result the boar was killed.

Lord Shiva sent his ganas to bring back the arrow. Similarly Arjuna too went near the dead boar to bring his arrow. Arjuna found his arrow lying on the ground. He picked it up in his hand. Right then the ganas arrived there and asked Arjuna to return that arrow as it belonged to their master (Shiva). But Arjuna refused to part with his arrow. Instead he asked the ganas, to convey his challenge to their master to have a dual with him.

The ganas went back to lord Shiva and narrated the whole story to him. Lord Shiva accepted Arjuna's challenge and went to fight him. His ganas accompanied him. Arjuna defeated all the ganas of Shiva. In the end Lord Shiva came forward to have a dual fight with him. Shiva was very much impressed by his valour. He revealed his real identity. Arjuna was very ashamed that he fought with Shiva. Lord Shiva consoled him and gave his weapon Pashupat to Arjuna.

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THE TWELVE JYOTIRLINGAS

Describing about the twelve Jyotirlingas, Suta told the sages:- "There are twelve Jyotirlingas which are as Follows : 1) Somnath in Saurashtra, 2)

MallikArjuna in Sri Shail, 3) Mahakal in Ujjain, 4) Amareshwar in Omkar, 5) Kedar in the Himalaya, 6)Bhimashankar at the bank of Bhima river. 7) Vishwanath in Varanasi. 8)Trayambakeshwar ar the bank of Gautami river, 9) Baidyanath at Chitabhumi, 10)Nagesh which is between Darukvan dwarika and Bhet dwarika ll)Rameshwar at Betubandh and 12) Dhushmesh in Shivalaya.

These above mentioned twelve Jyotirlingas are considered to the very sacred. A devotee who pays a visit to any of these places and worship, gets all of his wished fulfilled.

Out of these twelve Jyotirlingas, Somnath Jyotirlinga is belived to destroy the sorrows of Moon. A devotee who worships this Jyotirlinga gets cured from incurable diseases like leprosy etc. enjoys all kinds of worldly pleasures and attains salvation.

Similarly having a darshan of MallikArjuna helps a devotee to fulfill all of his desires.

Having a darshan of Mahakal at Ujjain helps a devotee to fulfill all kinds of desire and achieve salvation.

Similarly if a devotee merely touches the idol of Omkar linga then he achieves the desired fruits.

Kedarlinga is situated in the Himalayas and is considered to be very sacred.

Lord Shiva took his sixth incarnation as Bhima Shankar to kill the demon Bhima. This incarnation of Shiva tool place at a place called Kamarupa in Assam.

The seventh incarnation of lord Shiva was as Vishwanath at Kashi. This Jyotirlinga is considered to be very sacred and fulfiller of all the desires of a man.

Lord Shiva took his eighth incarnation at the bank of river Gautami at the request of sage Gautam. This Jyotirlinga too is considered to be very sacred and a fulfiller of all the desires of a man.

The ninth incarnation of Shiva was as Baidyanath at Deoghar in Bihar. This Jyotirlinga was established by the demon King Ravana. A devotee who worships this Jyotirlinga gets all of his wishes fulfilled. Because of this, it ia also known as Kamanalinga. Devotees carry the holy water of the Ganges from Sultanganj and both the idol of Baidyanath in the months of Shravana and Bhadrapaksha according to the Hindu calendar.

Lord Shiva took his tenth incarnation to kill the demon Daruk who used to live in Daruk forest. A devotee who worships Nagesh, never faces any calamity. The eleventh incarnation of lord Shiva was as Rameshwar linga, this linga was established by Sri Rama while the construction of a bridge over the sea was going on. Having a darshan of this Jyotirlinga bestowes both worldly pleasures and salvation.

Lord Shiva took his twelfth incarnation as Dhumeshwar after being pleased by Dhushma - the wife of Sumedha. Having a darshan of this Jyotirlinga helps a devotee to fulfill all of his desires. All the above mentioned twelve Jyotirlingas are very sacred and give total accomplishment to the devotees.

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PART FOUR KOTI RUDRA SAMHITA

THE GREATNESS OF 'UPALINGAS'

After describing about the twelve Jyotirlinga, Suta mentioned about the various Upalingas originating from them. The Upalinga named Someshwar is situated at a place where the earth meets the ocean. This Upalinga is also known as 'Antakesh'.

The Upalinga originating from MallikArjuna is famous by the name of 'Rudreshwar'. Similarly the Upalinga originating from Mahakal Jyotirlinga is known as 'Dughdhesh'.

The Upalinga manifesting from Omkar jyotirlinga is famous as 'Kardameshwar'. The Upalinga manifesting from Kedareshwar jyotirlinga is known as Bhuteshwar and is situated at the bank of Yamuna River.

The Upalinga manifesting from Bhima Shankar Jyotirlinga is famously known as 'Bheemeshwar'. The Upalingas manifesting from Nageshwar, Rameshwar and Dhushmeshwar Jyotirlingas are known as Bhuteshwar, Gupteshwar and Vyagreshwar respectively.

All these upalingas are considered to be very sacred. A devotee who has darshan of these Upalingas gets liberated from all of his sins.

Apart from these twelve Jyotirlingas and Upalingas, there are numerous other lingas, which have great religious importance. They are Kritikavaseshwar, Tilmandeshwar, Bhuteshwar, Batukeshwar, Pureshwar, Siddhanateshwar, Sringeshwar, Gopeshwar, Rangeshwar, Rameshwar, Atrishwar, Mahabal Linga Rameshwar, Ganeshwar, Shukreshwar, Chandrashekar, Rishishwar, Laliteshwar, Pashupatishwar, (Pashupatinath), Kumtinath and Andhakeshwar etc.

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ATRI AND ANUSUYA DO PENANACE

Sage Atri and his wife Anusuya were doing penance in the forest called Kamad, situated near the Chitrakut mountain. Once it did not rain for

many days. As a result people living in that area faced a severe drought.

Anusuya requested her husband to help out the people from their hardships. Sage Atri sat down to meditate. One by one, his disciples deserted him. Only Anusuya remained with him. She spent her days worshipping the Parthiva lingas and circumambulating sage Atri who was engrossed in his meditation. She had vowed not to have a single morsel of food till it rained.

All the deities became very pleased with their penance. They arrived at the place where both of them were doing penance and after giving blessings went back to their respective abodes.

Lord Shiva and river Ganges stayed there. It did not rain for fifty four years. Both sage Atri and Anusuya continued with their respective penance.

While doing penance, sage Atri felt thirsty. He requested Anusuya to fetch some water. Anusuya went with a Kamandal, in search of water but did not find it anywhere.

Ganga appeared before her and said- "I am very pleased with you. You can demand anything from me you like."

Anusuya demanded only a Kamandal full of water for her husband. Ganga instructed her to dig up a pit and when it was done she entered into that pit. Anusuya filled her Kamandal with the water from that pit and went back to her thirsty husband.

After quenching his thirst, Atri enquired from Anusuya as to where did she find water. Anusuya narrated the whole story. Both of them then went back to the place where Anusuya had met Ganga. Both of them requested Ganga to stay at that very place. Ganga agreed to remain there on the condition that Anusuya donates all the virtues attained by her husband by worshipping Lord Shiva for one year.

Anusuya donated all the virtues, without any hesitation. Lord Shiva became very much pleased by their charitable tendencies. He appeared before them. After eulogizing, Atri requested lord Shiva to remain in his hermitage accompanied by Parvati. Lord Shiva agreed to do so. Ganga

also stayed with them. Later on Atri performed a grand Yagya after the completion of which it rained heavily. Thus Atri ended the phase of drought by his tremendous penance.

River Mandakani flows from that same 'Pit' which Anusuya had dugged up. The Shivalinga, which was worshipped by Anusuya during that time later on, came to be known as Atrishwar Linga.

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THE BRAHMIN WOMAN ATTAINS TO HEAVEN

Once upon a time, there lived a brahmin at a place called 'Kami' situated at the bank of river 'Reva'. When the brahmin became old, he went to

Kashi after leaving behind his wife to live with his sons. After sometime the brahmin died.

When the brahmins sons came to know about his death, they went to Kashi and performed his last rites. After some days the brahmins woman died too. The Brahmin's son - Suvas again went to Kashi carrying the ashes of their dead mother as per her own wish.

On his way, Suvad became a guest of another brahmin. Suvad witnessed an amazing even in the night, in which he saw his host trying to milk the cow. At first he allowed the calf to drink the cow's milk for sometime. His host then moved away the calf from the cow. The calf was still hungry and was not willing to move away from the cow. The brahmins trashed the calf very badly. This made the cow very sad and vowed to teach that wicked brahmin a lesson.

The calf tried his best to convince his mother against doing this as her action might make her commit the gravest of sins - the brahmahatya. But the cow was not worried, as she knew the method of nullifying that sin.

Suvad was surprised that the cow knew the method of nullifying the sin of brahmahatya. Next morning, the brahmin entrusted the job of milking the cow, the brahmins' son gave a severe trashing to the calf who was unwilling to move away from his mother.

The angry cow lifted the Brahmin's son with her horns and dashed him against the ground. The Brahmin's son died on the spot. When the brahmin returned to his home he became very furious on seeing his son dead. He drove both the cow and the calf out of his house, after beating them very badly.

The colour of the cow had turned blue due to the trashing she got from her brahmin. The cow went to the temple of Nandikeshwar, situated at the bank of river Narmada. To neutralize the sin of Brahmahatya she took dip in the water of river Narmada for three times. As a result she regained her original colour.

Suvad had followed the cow all along the way. He was amazed to see the cow regaining her original colour. He proceeded on his further journey towards Kashi. He met a beautiful lady on the way who enquired as to

where was he going. Suvad told her that he was going to immense the ashes of her mother in the holy water of the river Ganges.

The lady advised him to immerse the ashes in the water of Narmada itself, as the holy Ganga herself comes to meet Narmada on the seventh day of Vaishakh every year.

"Today is the same auspicious day when the holy Ganga will be coming to meet Narmada." Said the beautiful woman. She also told him that immersing the ashes in the waters of Narmada would help his mother to attain to the divine abode.

This beautiful lady was none other than Ganga herself. After advising Suvad she disappeared. Suvad followed the instruction of that beautiful lady. He immersed the ashes in the waters of Narmada. He saw his mother attaining a divine body. His mother blessed Suvad and then attained to the abode of Lord Shiva.

THE BRAHMIN WOMAN ATTAINS TO HEAVEN

Once upon a time, there lived a brahmin at a place called 'Karni' situated at the bank of river 'Reva'. When the brahmin became old, he went to Kashi after leaving behind his wife to live with his sons. After sometime the brahmin died.

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MAHABAL SHIVALINGA

Describing about Mahabal Shivalinga, Suta said to the sages- "Mahabal Shivalinga is situated at Gokama area. A devotee who has a darshan of

Mahabal Shivalinga on the eighth or fourteenth day of 'Ardranakshatra falling on Monday, becomes free from all of his sins and attains to the Shivaloka."

Having a darshan of this Shivalinga on any other day too helps a man to attain to the abode of Almighty. All the deities, ancestors, holy rivers like Ganga and the Nagas stand guard on all the four entrances of Mahabal temple"

"Even the most degraded sinner attains salvation if he worships Mahabal Shivalinga on the fourteenth day of Magha (dark lunar phase). On this day people come from all over India to see the grand festival."

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THE REASON BEHIND PHALLIC WORSHIP

The sages curiously asked Suta about the purpose with which Parvati had decided to appear in the form of a Vagina. Suta narrated the following

tale:

"Long long ago, some sages used to do penance in a Shiva temple situated near Daruk forest. One day they went to collect woods needed for the Yagya. Lord Shiva wanted to test their devotion, so he arrived before the sages' wives in naked position holding his own phallus in his hand. The wives of the sages became frightened by Shiva's appearance.

"When the sages returned after collecting woods, they became very furious to see a naked person luring their wives. They asked Shiva to reveal his identity. When Shiva did not give any reply, they cursed him to become a phallus."

"The Phallus fell down from the hand of Lord Shiva and generated so much of heat that all the three worlds started to bum. The sages became very nervous and went to seek the help of lord Brahma. Lord Brahma revealed to then that the person who they cursed was none other than Lord Shiva himself. He also instructed them to please goddess Parvati, as she only could have them from Shiva's wrath by appearing in the form of Vagina and holding the Phallus."

"The sages followed the instruction of Lord Brahma. Goddess Parvati appeared in the form of Vagina and held Shiva's phallus in herself. The sages then worshipped the Shivalinga. This jyotirlinga became famous by the name of Hatkeshwar."

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THE ORIGIN OF BATUKNATH

Long long ago there lived a brahmin by the name of Dadhichi. His wife to a low caste, though his son - Sudarshan was very learned. The name of his

wife was Tukula. She had her husband under total control and influence.

Sudarshan had four sons. One day Dadhichi planned to go out due to some work. He entrusted the job of Shiva's worship to Sudarshan. Sudarshan worshipped the idol of Shiva daily without any fail.

On the Shivaratri day, Sudarshan too had observed a fast like rest of his family members. He worshipped Shiva's idol in the morning as usual and then went to his home. During the night time, he had a sexual relationship with his wife. After that, he sat down to worship without purifying himself. Lord Shiva became very furious by his action. He immobilized him by his curse.

Dadhichi was very sad to see the condition of his son. He commenced a tremendous penance to please goddess Parvati. After being pleased by his penance, Parvati requested Lord Shiva to liberate Sudarshan from his curse.

Lord Shiva became pleased and blessed Sudarshan by saying that he would become famous as Batuknath and also that the worship of Batuknath would amount to the worship of lord Shiva.

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THE ORIGIN OF SOMNATH

The moon had twenty seven wives, one of whom was Rohini. The moon loved Rohini very much, which made the rest of his wives very jealous

and angry. They went to their father -Daksha and complained about Moon's behaviour.

Daksha went to Moon and advised him to give proper attention to all of his wives. But it did not have any effect on him and he continued giving special treatment to Rohini.

When Daksha came to know about this, he became very curious. He cursed Moon to become weak and devoid of radiance. The moon then sent the deities to lord Brahma to seek his help. At first, lord Brahma became very angry with Moon, but later on he cooled down and told the deities, that Moon can get liberated from the curse, if he chants 'Mahamrityunjaya mantra' by going to Prabhus area.

Moon went to Prabhas area and chanted Mahamrityunjaya mantra for ten crore time after sitting in one posture. Lord Shiva appeared before him and asked him to demand anything he wished.

Moon requested lord Shiva to liberate him from the curse given by Daksha. Lord Shiva told moon that the words of Daksha can never became untrue. However he blessed moon by saying that he would wane during the dark lunar phase due to the curse, but wax during the dark lunar phase due to his (Shiva's) blessings. Lord Shiva also provided moon that he would be present along with Parvati near him (moon).

Thus Lord Shiva established himself as Somanath. The deities constructed a 'Kunda' named Chandrakunda. It is believed that the Moon because liberated from the curse by taking a bath in this Punda.

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THE ORIGIN OF MALLIKARJUNA

Once, under the influence of Sage Narada, Kartikeya had gone to the Kraunch Mountain to do penance. Shiva and Parvati could not bear the

pain of his separation for long. Both of them went to the Kraunch mountain to see him.

When Kartikeya saw them coming he moved to some other place. When lord Shiva saw this he established himself in the form of Jyotirlinga, which later on became famous as MallikArjuna jyotirlinga.

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THE ORIGIN OF MAHAKALESHWAR

There used to live a brahmin at Avantikapuri. He was a great devotee of lord Shiva and used to worship daily.

This brahmin had four sons whose names were Devapriya, Medhapriya, Sukrit and Dharmabahu. By the blessings of lord Shiva the brahmin enjoyed a very happy and contented life. After his death, the brahmin's son continued the tradition of Shiva's worship.

There was a mountain named Ratanak on which a demon named Dushan used to live. Being intoxicated by the boons received from Lord Brahma, he used to torment all the people. He had all the surrounding area under his control except the house in which the brahmin family lived.

Dushan ordered his fellow demons to bring the brahmin after capturing them. All the demons went to Avantikapuri and created havoc. They went to the brahmins and told them about Dushan's order. The brahmins were busy doing worship at that time so they did not give ear to their words. The brahmins continued with their worship. The demon became very angry and tried to attack them.

Suddenly the earth cracked with a tremendous sound and lord Shiva manifested from within the cracks. He killed all the demons. He then went to the Ratnamala mountain and killed Dushan. He again returned to the brahmins and expressed his desire of fulfilling their wishes. The brahmins expressed their desire of getting liberated from the bondage's of this world. They also requested him to remain at that place. Lord Shiva accepted their request and established himself in the form of Mahakal.

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THE ORIGIN OF OMKARESHWAR

Once, Narada had gone to meet Vindhya mountain. Vindhya was very arrogant in his behaviour. Narada told him that Sumeru mountain was

even greater than him and so his false pride had no basis.

Vindhya became very dejected and disheartened. He went to Amgreshwar and started worshipping Shiva after making a Parthiv linga. Lord Shiva became very pleased by his penance. He appeared before Vindhya and blessed him. After sometime the sages too arrived there and worshipped Shiva. They requested lord Shiva to remain at that place forever. Lord Shiva established himself as Paremeshwar Linga. One Shivalinga already existed at Amareshwar, which became famous as Omkareshwar.

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THE ORIGIN OF KEDARESHWAR

Two incarnations of Lord Vishnu by the names of Nara and Vishnu did penance at Badrikasharama. Both of them used to worship the idol of

Shiva daily. Lord Shiva used to arrive in his subtle form and accept their offerings without being noticed by them.

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THE ORIGIN OF BHIMA SHANKAR

Bhima - the demon, was the son of Kumbhakama and Karkati. After Kumbhakarna was killed by Sri Rama. Karkati and Bhima went to live at

Sahya mountain.

When Bhima grew up he asked Karkati about his father. Karkati told him that his father had been killed by Rama. Bhima swore to avenge his father's death. He did a tremendous penance to please lord Brahma. Brahma appeared before him and blessed him with insurmountable power and strength.

Bhima then drove out the deities from heaven. He went to Kamarupa and defeated the king. He captured the king and put him in prison. The helpless king used to pass his time by chanting the mantra- Om Namah Shivay. His wife worshipped the Parthiva linga of Shiva for the release of the king.

All the deities went at the bank of river Mahakeshi and worshipped the Parthiva linga of lord Shiva. Lord Shiva appeared before them and assured them that the end of Bhima was near.

Lord Shiva went to the king who had been held captive by Bhima. His ganas too accompanied him. All of them waited for the opportune time to kill Bhima.

Meanwhile somebody informed Bhima that the king was doing worship of Shiva in the prison, with the objective of getting Bhima killed.

Bhima arrived at the spot in the prison where the king was worshipping the Parthiva linga of Lord Shiva. He made fun of Shiva and struck the Shivalinga with his sword.

Right then. Lord Shiva appeared. A tremendous battle was fought between both of them. The battle continued for a long period. Sage Narada requested lord Shiva to kill Bhima as soon as it was possible.

Lord Shiva produced fire by his loud roar. In a very short time the fire spread in the whole forest. All the demons including Bhima were burnt to death. The deities and the sages arrived there. They requested Lord Shiva to remain there. Lord Shiva accepted their request and established himself in the form of Bhima Shankar Jyotirlinga.

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THE ORIGIN OF VISHVESHWAR

With the desire of giving liberation to the living creatures of this world, lord Shiva had kept some portion of land on his Trishul after separating it

from the rest of Brahma's creation. The name of this sacred place is Manikamika. The Shivalinga by the name of Avinukta was established by lord Shiva himself. Later on this sacred place was brought down from the Trishul and established on the land of Shiva. This sacred place of pilgrimage later on became famous as Kashi and the Shivalinga as Avimukta Visheshwar.

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THE ORIGIN OF TRAYAMBAKESHWAR

During the ancient time there lived a famous sage named Gautami. The name of his wife was Ahilya. Once it did not rain for one hundred years as

the result of which the whole area was affected by drought.

Sage Gautami did a tremendous penance to please Varuna appeared before Gautam, he was requested to cause rain. But Varuna expressed his inability in causing rain. He told Gautam to please lord Shiva so that his wish could be fulfilled. Later on Varuna instructed Gautam to dig a up a pit, which he (Varuna) filled with water. Varuna blessed Gautam by saying that this pond would never dry up. The sages who had abandoned that place returned there. Everybody became happy and satisfied.

One day, sage Gautam instructed his disciples to fetch some water from that pond. When the disciples reached there, they found the wives of numerous sages present at the bank of the pond. The sages' wives did not allow them to take water and instead they rebuked them. The disciples returned back to the hermitage and narrated the whole story to sage Gautam.

Ahilya pacified the angry disciples and went to the pond to fetch water. From that day onwards this became very daily routine. One day Ahilya met the wives of the sages. They tried to prevent her from fetching water. Not only that they went back to his respective hermitages and filled the ears of their husbands. All the sages became very angry.

The sages worshipped lord Ganesha to please him. When Ganesha appeared, they requested him to drive Gautam out from that place. At first Ganesha was reluctant to accept their demand but when they kept a persisting he agreed at last.

Ganesha entered the field of Gautam in which barley was being cultivated. Ganesha had disguised himself as a cow. He started grazing the barley crops.

When Gautam saw the cow grazing crops, he tried to drive her out from the field by hitting a grass on her back. The artificial cow died instantly. Gautam was very sorry for his act. Meanwhile all the sages from the surrounding area arrived there. They forced Gautam to abandon that place at once.

Gautam left that place and made his hermitage at a little distance from there. One day he came to the sages and asked them as to how could he

atone for his sins. The sages told him that his sins could be atoned only when he circumambulates the whole earth thrice, all the while saying, 'I have killed a cow'. They also told him that after that he would have to perform austerities for one month.

If this is not possible then you will have to help Ganga manifest herself and take bath in her water. Otherwise you will have to worship three crores Parthiva lingas. Only then, you can get liberated from the sin of killing a cow," said the sages.

Gautam made the Parthiva lingas and started worshipping them. Lord Shiva became very pleased by his devotion and appeared before him. Sage Gautam requested lord Shiva to liberate him from the sins of killing a cow. He also requested lord Shiva to manifest the stream of river Ganga that place.

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When Gautam saw the cow grazing crops, he tried to drive her out from the field by hitting a grass on her back. The artificial cow died instantly. Gautam was very sorry for his act. Meanwhile all the sages from the surrounding area arrived there. They forced Gautam to abandon that place at once.

Gautam left that place and made his hermitage at a little distance from there. One day he came to the sages and asked them as to how could he atone for his sins. The sages told him that his sins could be atoned only when he circumambulates the whole earth thrice, all the while saying, 'I have killed a cow'. They also told him that after that he would have to perform austerities for one month.

If this is not possible then you will have to help Ganga manifest herself and take bath in her water. Otherwise you will have to worship three crores Parthiva lingas. Only then, you can get liberated from the sin of killing a cow," said the sages.

Gautam made the Parthiva lingas and started worshipping them. Lord Shiva became very pleased by his devotion and appeared before him. Sage Gautam requested lord Shiva to liberate him from the sins of killing a cow. He also requested lord Shiva to manifest the stream of river Ganga that place.

Lord Shiva tried his best to make him understand that he was innocent and the real culprits that he was innocent and the real culprits were those wicked sages. But, Gautam was unconvinced. At last lord Shiva instructed Ganga to appear in the form of a woman. Gautam eulogized Ganga. By

the blessings of lord Shiva Gautam was liberated from his sins of killing a cow. After that Ganga expressed her desire to go back but lord Shiva asked her to remain on the earth till the twenty-eighth nanvantar. Ganga accepted to do that, on the condition that Lord Shiva along with Parvati too would remain present on the earth. Lord Shiva established himself as Trayambakeshwar Jyotirlinga and Ganga became famous as Gautami Ganga.

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THE ORIGIN OF BAIDYANATH

The demon king- Ravana did a tremendous penance to please lord Shiva and to get a boon from him. Even after his severe penance when lord

Shiva did still not appear, he started offering his heads one by one to lord Shiva. This way he already severed his nine heads and offered them to Shiva. When he was about to severe his last remaining head, just the lord Shiva appeared before him. He blessed Ravana with unparalleled power and strength. Lord Shiva also made him a ten headed demon once again.

But Ravana was not satisfied. He requested lord Shiva to come along with him to Lanka. Lord Shiva gave Ravana s Shivalinga and warned him against keeping it on the earth, as then no power on the earth could lift that Shivalinga from there.

Ravana proceeded with the Shivalinga. On the way he felt the urge to urinate. Ravana gave that Shivalinga to a cowherd boy and went to urinate. The cowherd boy held the Shivalinga for sometime. He felt that the Shivalinga was becoming heavier and heavier. He could not bear the weight of the Shivalinga for too long. He kept it on the ground. When Ravana returned he became very sad after seeing the Shivalinga on the ground. He knew that, now it was impossible to lift it from that place. Ravana established the Shivalinga there, which became famous as 'Baidyanath jyotirlinga'.

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THE ORIGIN OF NAGESHWAR JYOTIRLINGA

During ancient times, there lived a demon named Daruk. The name of his wife was Daruka. They used to torment the people living in that area. The

residents of that area went to sage 'Aursh' and narrated about their miseries and requested him to end this menace.

'Aursh' assured them that very soon their hardships would come to an end. He then went to do his penance. The deities appeared before him after being pleased by his tremendous penance. Sage 'Aursh' requested the deities to kill the demons.

The deities went to fight with the demons. The demons got scarred and started thinking about the means by which their lives could be saved. Daruka the wife of Daruk had received a boon from goddess Parvati due to which she had gained unparalleled power. She carried the whole forest and placed it in the middle of the sea. This way the demons again lived without being perturbed by the threat of the deities' attack.

One day the demons saw many boats sailing in the sea, on which were many people on board. The demons made all the people captive. There was a man named Supriya who was great devotee of Lord Shiva. He used to worship lord Shiva daily, even though he saw held under captivity. Rest of the people too got influenced by his devotion and everybody started worshipping lord Shiva.This way, six months had passed.

One day a demon saw Supriya worshipping the idol of lord Shiva. He went to Daruk and informed him. Daruk became extremely furious. He asked Supriya as to whom was he worshipping. Supriya still engrossed in his worship did not give any reply. This made Daruk even more angry. He tried to kill Supriya. Lord Shiva appeared and killed all the demons.

Daruka's heart became full of grief at the news of her husband's death. She went to Parvati and told her how lord Shiva had killed Daruka. Parvati met lord Shiva and both of them decided to protect there respective devotees by establishing themselves at that place. Thus, Nageshwar jyotirlinga came into existence.

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ESTABLISHMENT OF RAMESHWAR

After Hanuman brought the new that Sita had been held captive by Ravana at Lanka, Sri Rama proceeded towards Lanka with a huge army.

After receiving the seashore he faced the problems of crossing over the sea.

Sri Rama made a Parthiva linga of Shiva and worshipped it. Lord Shiva became very please with him and appeared. He blessed Sri Rama to be victorious. Sri Rama on the other hand, requested him to establish himself in that Parthiva linga, to which lord Shiva agreed. This way Ramaeshwar jyotirlinga' came into existence.

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THE ORIGIN OF DHUSHMESH JYOTIRLINGA

There used to live a brahmin by the name of Sudharma, who belonged to the lineage of sage Bhardwaj. He was a great devotee of lord Shiva.

Sudeha was his wife. Sudharma had no son.

Sudeha desires for a son. She expressed her desire to Sudharma but he did not listen to her pleas. One day Sudeha had gone for an outing accompanied by her companions. Incidentally a quarrel ensured among them and her companions made fun of her issue less status. Sudeha became very sad. After returning to her hermitage, she narrated the whole incident to Sudharma.

Sudharma meditated on the form of Shiva and threw two flowers, towards his wife. He thought that if Sudeha picks up the flower, which he had thrown with his right hand, then certainly a son would be bom. But if she picks up the another flower then there is no chance of her giving birth to a son. Unfortunately Sudeha picked up the flower which Sudharma had thrown with his left hand.

Sudharma told his wife that she was never going to become a mother. He advised her to dedicate her life in the devotion of lord Shiva. When Sudeha leamt that there was no chance of her becoming a mother, she insisted her husband to marry for a second time, so that he could become a father. But Sudharma refused to marry for the second.

Sudeha brought her younger sister-Dhushma to the hermitage and married her with reluctant Sudharma. Dhushma proved to be a very faithful wife. She engaged herself in the service of Sudharma and Sudeha. She also used to worship the Parthiva-linga of Shiva daily.

After her worship she used to immerse the Parthiva lingas in a pond. This way, when she had accomplished the worship of one lakh Parthiva lingas, lord Shiva blessed her with a son. Sudharma was extremely pleased but Sudeha became jealous of her own sister.

When the child grew up, he was married to a beautiful brahmin girl. Dhushma instructed the bride to take a special care of Sudeha. So the bride engaged herself in the service of everybody. She took special care of looking into the needs of Sudeha. But still, Sudeha's jealousy did not diminish.

One day gripped by excessive jealousy and anger, she killed Dhushma's son while he was asleep. She cut his body into many pieces and threw

those pieces into the same pond, in which Dhushma used to immerse the Parthiva lingas.

When the daughter in law noticed a piece of flesh on the bed she started crying. She went to Dhushma and narrated the whole story. Hearing the news of her son's killing, Dhushma too started crying Sudeha also wept artificially.

Sudharma arrived there. Though he himself was very sad yet he instructed Dhushma to do the daily worship of Parthiva linga as usual. Dhushma obeyed the command of her husband, She worshipped the Parthiva lingas and went to the pond of immense.

By the blessings of lord Shiva, her son was standing at the bank of the pond alive. He came towards his mother and said-

"Mother! I have become alive even after my death."

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Dhushma was still engrossed in her thoughts of lord Shiva, so she could not listen to her son. Lord Shiva appeared and blessed Dhushma. He also expressed his desire to punish her wicked sister - Sudeha for her evil deed, but Dhushma requested him to forgive her. She also requested lord

Shiva to stay there forever. Lord Shiva accepted her demand and established himself in the form of Dhushmeshwar Jyotirlinga. Sudharma and Sudeha arrived at that place and worshipped Shiva. At last everybody returned home happily.

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LORD VISHNU RECEIVES SUDARSHAN CHAKRA

The deities went to lord Vishnu, after being tormented by the demons. They requested him to annihilate the demons. After assuring them. Lord Vishnu went to Kailash mountain to do his penance. But even his tremendous penance was not enough to please Lord Shiva. Lord Vishnu then worshipped lord Shiva by chanting the mantras of Shiva Sahastranamavali. He also offered one thousand lotus flowers to lord Shiva in course of his worship.

One day Shiva wanted to test the devotion of lord Vishnu. He stole one lotus flower from among the one thousand flowers. When lord Vishnu began his worship he found that there was one flower less. To make up for this deficiency, he offered his one eye to lord Shiva - his eye which has been compared with a lotus flower.

Lord Shiva was very mush impressed by his exceptional devotion. He appeared before Vishnu and asked him to demand any boon he wished. Lord Vishnu demanded a divine weapon to annihilate the demons. Lord Shiva gave him a sparkling Sudharshan Chakra. On the request of Lord Vishnu he established himself in the form of Harishwar Shivalinga. At last lord Vishnu killed the demon with his Sudarshan Chakra.

Suta told the sages that lord Vishnu had worshipped lord Shiva with the help of his one thousand names. Some of the chief names of Shiva are Shiva, Har, Mrid, Rudra, Pushkar, Pushpalochan, Arthigamya, Sadachar, Sharv, Shambhu, Maheshwar, etc.

A devotee who chants these one thousand names of lord Shiva attains all the accomplishments. Chanting it during distress helps a man to become free from all kings of misfortune. Lord Vishnu could kill the demons only because of the power he derived from the chanting of Sahastranam.

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THE DEVOTEES OF SHIVA

Describing about the numerous devotees of Shiva who were famous for their devotion towards lord Shiva, Suta named a few of them like

Durvasa, Vishwamitra, Dadhichi, Gautam, Kanad, Bhargav, Brihaspati, Vaishampayam, Parashar, Vyasa, Upamanyu, Yagyavalkya, Jaimini and Garg etc.

He also narrated a tale connected with King Sudyumna. Once Sudyumna had gone into that forest which was gifted to Parvati by lord Shiva, with the warning that any man who dares to enter it would become a woman.

As soon as Sudyumna entered that forest he got transformed into a woman. He became very sad. He worshipped lord Shiva to regain his masculinity. Lord Shiva pleased by his devotion, he blessed him to be as a man for one month and again as a woman for the same period of time alternately.

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AUSTERITIES AND MAHASHIVARATRI FOR SHIVA'S WORSHIP

Once Parvati asked lord Shiva as to which were the austerities when on being performed by a devotee, helps him to attain both worldly

accomplishments as well as liberation.

Lord Shiva told her about ten austerities connected with his worship and their methods. He said-

"On the eighth day of every month a devotee should worship me by observing a fast for the whole day and breaking it in the night. But on Kalashtami a devotee must observe the fast for the whole day and night. He must not have food on that day. On the eleventh day of the dark-lunar month, a devotee must worship me and observe fast during the day. He should break the fast in the night. But on the eleventh day of the bright lunar month, a devotee should observe a fast for the whole period of day and night. On the thirteenth day of dark-lunar month a devotee must observe fast for the whole period of day and night, whereas on the thirteenth day of a bright lunar phase he should observe a fast during the day and break it in the night. A fast observed on Monday should be broken only in the night."

Lord Shiva continued with his statements-

"Among all the austerities and fastings Mahashivaratri holds a supreme place. It falls on the fourteenth day of the dark lunar month of Phalgun. On this day the devotee should take a vow to observe a fast after awakening in the morning and finishing his daily choirs. He must observe a fast for the whole day and night. In the night he should worship me either in the temple or in his own home according to his convenience. He should worship me with the help of sixteen modes of worship (Shodasopachar). He should either chant the mantras of Laghurudra or perform 'abhishek' during the course of worship. While doing worship he should eulogize me and perform 'artis' in my praise. He can perform 'abhishek' with either of the followings - Milk, water, sacred water of belonging to a place of pilgrimage, sprinkling water with Kusha, Sugarcane juice, Honey and Ghee etc. The devotee should engage himself in my devotion for the whole day. In the end he should feed the brahmins and make donation to them. A fast observed in this way gives infinite virtues to the devotee."

After observing fasts for fourteen consecutive years on each of the Shivaratri days, a devotee should perform 'Uddyapan' (religious rites

performed on the accomplishment of an observance). On the day preceding the Uddyapan ceremony, a devotee must have food for one time. The next day a devotee should perform Uddyapan after making a religious vow and according to the appropriate methods. A devotee who performs Uddyapan in the above mentioned way attains to the Shivaloka.

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THE GREATNESS OF SHIVARATRI

There used to live a poor Bheel named Gurudruha. He was very poor. One day finding no food available in his house, he went to the forest to hunt

an animal. Unfortunately he did not find any animal which he could hunt.

Being hungry, he sat down on the bank of a pond and pondered as to what would happen to his family members who were hungry too. He thought that if he waited there, then he might get a chance to kill a thirsty animal, which arrives there to drink water.

Gurudruha climbed up a bael tree and waited for his prey. A Shivalinga was established just under that tree and co incidentally it was a Shivaratri day. When the first three hours of the night had passed, he saw a female deer arriving with her young ones. He got ready with his bow and arrow and aimed his arrow towards the female deer. By coincidence some leaves from that bael tree fell on the Shivalinga along with some drops of water from the vessel in which he was carrying water. Gurudruha had accomplished the worship of Shiva during the first 'Prahar' of the night unawaringly.

After hearing the noise made by falling drops of water, the female deer looked up. She saw Gurudruha sitting with his bow and arrows. She asked him about his desire. Gurudruha told her that he wanted to kill her, so that he could feed his family members.

The female deer requested him to allow her to go so that she could leave her young ones in the safe custody of her husband. She promised to come back. At first Gurudruha was reluctant but when the female deer started giving illustrations from the scriptures, he allowed her to go.

Mean while the sister of female deer arrived there with her young ones. When Gurudruha sow her, he got ready to kill her. Suddenly his movements on the tree, made some leaves of bael and few drops of water to fall on the Shivalinga. It was the second Prahara of the night and Gurudruha had again performed the worshiped of Shiva unawaringly.

When the female deer (Second) heard the noise made by falling drop of water She looked up towards Gurudruha. She asked him about his desire. When Gurudruha told about his desire, she requested him to allow her to go so that she could hand over her young ones in the safe custody of her husband. Initially, Gurudruha was reluctant to allow her to go, but when she promised to return back, he allowed her to go.

Gurudruha sat on the branches of the bael tree waiting for his prey. The second prahar of the night was coming to an end and the third prahar about to begin.

The deer arrived there searching his wife and children. Gurudruha again made himself ready to kill that dear. Again some leaves and few drops of water fell on the Shivalinga. The worship of Shiva during the third Prahara had been accomplished by Gurudruha, though unawaringly. On hearing the noise made by the falling drops of water, the dear looked up and asked Gurudruha about his desire. Gurudruha told him about his desire.

The deer requested Gurudruha to allow him to meet his wife and children for once. The deer promised to return back. After becoming satisfied by his intentions, Gurudruha allowed him to go to meet his family.

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Being hungry, he sat down on the bank of a pond and pondered as to what would happen to his family members who were hungry too. He thought that if he waited there, then he might get a chance to kill a thirsty animal, which arrives there to drink water.

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After hearing the noise made by falling drops of water, the female deer looked up. She saw Gurudruha sitting with his bow and arrows. She asked him about his desire. Gurudruha told her that he wanted to kill her, so that he could feed his family members.

The female deer requested him to allow her to go so that she could leave her young ones in the safe custody of her husband. She promised to come back. At first Gurudruha was reluctant but when the female deer started giving illustrations from the scriptures, he allowed her to go.

Mean while the sister of female deer arrived there with her young ones. When Gurudruha sow her, he got ready to kill her. Suddenly his movements on the tree, made some leaves of bael and few drops of water to fall on the Shivalinga. It was the second Prahara of the night and Gurudruha had again performed the worshiped of Shiva unawaringly.

When the female deer (Second) heard the noise made by falling drop of water She looked up towards Gurudruha. She asked him about his desire. When Gurudruha told about his desire, she requested him to allow her to go so that she could hand over her young ones in the safe custody of her husband. Initially, Gurudruha was reluctant to allow her to go, but when she promised to return back, he allowed her to go.

Gurudruha sat on the branches of the bael tree waiting for his prey. The second prahar of the night was coming to an end and the third prahar about to begin.

The deer arrived there searching his wife and children. Gurudruha again made himself ready to kill that dear. Again some leaves and few drops of water fell on the Shivalinga. The worship of Shiva during the third Prahara had been accomplished by Gurudruha, though unawaringly. On hearing the noise made by the falling drops of water, the dear looked up and asked Gurudruha about his desire. Gurudruha told him about his desire.

The deer requested Gurudruha to allow him to meet his wife and children for once. The deer promised to return back. After becoming satisfied by his intentions, Gurudruha allowed him to go to meet his family.

Gurudruha sat on the bael tree waiting for the deers anxiously. The third prahar of the night was approaching its end and the fourth prahar was about to begin.

Suddenly Gurudruha saw all the three deer's coming towards the pond. He became extremely pleased at the prospect of getting flesh of three animals. He got read with his bow and arrows. His movements on the bael tree again made some leaves and few drops of water to fall on the Shivaling. Gurudruha had successfully accomplished the worship of Shiva even during the fourth Prahar. Not only this he had also remained awake for the whole night of Shivaratri.

The fast observed by Gurudruha on Shivaratri along with the worship of Shiva though unawaringly had made him on enlightened person. The thought of killing the deers remained no longer in his heart. He thanked all the deers for their help in his attainment of enlightenment.

Lord Shiva became extremely pleased and appeared before him. He blessed Gurudruha that in his next birth he would get an opportunity to serve Sri Rama and would become famous as Nishad. Lord Shiva also told Gurudruha that by the blessings of Sri Rama he would attain salvation by the blessings of Sri Rama he would attain salvation.

Suta while describing about the virtues of observing fast on Shivaratri told the sages that if a fast observed unwaringly on Shivaratri gives such virtues then what could be said about a fast which is observed deliberately. According to Suta such a fast would bestow both worldly pleasures and salvation.

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DIFFERENT STAGES OF LIBERATION

Regarding the different stages of liberation, Suta told the sages that there were five stages of liberation capable of freeing a man from the sorrows of

this world. 1) Sarupya (Similitude with the Almighty), 2) Salokya, 3) Sannidhya (living in the proximity of the almighty), 4) Sayujya (getting united with the almight), 5) Kalvalya (Devotion towards God)

Only lord Shiva is capable of bestowing liberation. One can attain dharm (virtuosity), Artha (Wealth) and Kam (desires and wishes) by the worship of other deities, but lord Shiva bestowes all the four of them.

Lord Brahma is believed to be the master of the three elementary qualities i.e. Satva, Rajas, and Tamas. Shiva is beyond these qualities and even the nature itself. He is formless. Lord Shiva is a mystery which remains unsolved even though many sages and even lord Brahma have tried to solve this mystery called Shiva.

The fifth stage of liberation is called Kaivalya which is attained by having complete devotion towards lord Shiva. In the present era of Kali, where the attainment of self knowledge is very difficult, devotion is relatively an easier path.

Even devotion has been categorised into two types: a) Sagun (with form) b) Nirguna (formless)

If man worships lord Shiva with total devotion he attains self knowledge. Each and every objects of this world is nothing but the manifestation of Shiva's power. The creation achieves expansion only when he desires. Shiva is omniscient but himself invisible. Just as the fire, which already exists in the wood but is visible only after it is rubbed, similarly only the 'Gyanis' can experience lord Shiva even though he is omnipresent. Just as there is no difference between cause and effect, but is appears so due to our ignorance, similarly an ignorant man can never experience the omnipresent Shiva by his sense organs. The living things possess ego but lord Shiva is egoless. A man can successfully subjugates his ego by becoming knowledgeable and attains liberation after uniting with lord Shiva.

This knowledge was received by lord Vishnu from Shiva. Lord Vishnu later on revealed it to lord Brahma and Brahma in turn revealed it to his manasputra - Sanak, etc. The manasputra revealed this knowledge to Narada and Narada revealed it to Vyasa.

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PART FIVE UMA SAMHITA

CONVERSATION BETWEEN KRISHNA and UPAMANYU

Once, Lord Krishna went to Kailash mountain to do penance with the desire of having a son. He found Maharishi Upamanyu engrossed in his meditation. He told Upamanyu about his desire and requested him to describe about the greatness of lord Shiva.

Upamanu described about his own experience when he had divine glimpses of lord Shiva who was meditating

"Once I saw Shiva who was surrounded by all the deities. Lord Shiva was engrossed in his deep meditation. Shiva had in his possession all the divine weapons like - Trident, Axe, Noose, Sudarshan etc. Lord Vishnu and Brahma were also present there. I eulogized lord Shiva who became pleased with me. Lord Shiva wanted to bless me with a boon. I requested lord Shiva to bless me with three things- 1)1 should always remain his devotee 2) to be able to know about the past, present and future events, 3) My family should never feel the scarcity of rice and milk."

"Lord Shiva not only blessed me with all these three things, but also to be able to see the Vaivasvat kalpa."

After completing his story, sage Upamanyu told Krishna he must worship lord Shiva if he was desirous of a son, because Lord Shiva can be pleased quite easily.

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SRI KRISHNA DOES PENANCE

Sri Krishna then proceeded to do his penance after getting initiated by Upamanyu with the mantra - OM NAMAH SHIVAY. He did a

tremendous penance for fifteen months by standing on his toe. In the sixteenth month lord Shiva and Parvati appeared before him after being pleased by his penance. Lord Shiva expressed his desire to bless Krishna. Krishna demanded eight boons. 1) May his intelligence always remain inclined towards religiousness. 2) May he attain immortal fame, 3) May he has his abode in Shiva's proximity, 4) May his faith and devotion in Shiva be unswerving, 5) May he have ten valiant sons, 6) May he be victorious against his enemies, 7) May all his enemies be destroyed and 8) May be dear to all the yogis. After receiving eight boons from Lord Shiva, Krishna demanded one boon from goddess Parvati. May he always be in the service of his parents and the brahmins. Sri Krishna then went back to Upamanyu and narrated the whole story. At last he returned to Dwarka.

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CLASSIFICATION OF GRAVE SINS

Describing about the sins, Suta told the sages that altogether there were twelve types of sins committed by a man by his actions, thought speech.

Out of them having a desire for another person's wife, being desirous of another's wealth, having evil designs against other people and drifting towards sinful path are considered to be sins committed by one's thoughts.

The following sins are supposed to be committed by speech - conversating with a woman who is having periods, telling lies, unpleasing talks and backbiting.

The following sins are committed by one's actions eating things, which are not worth eating's, indulging in violence and uncivilized activities and taking other's wealth by improper means.

Even among all these sins some are considered to be graver, like criticizing teacher, hermit and parents etc, stealing the property of temple or a brahmin. A person commits Mahapap (grave sin) if he indulges in any of the following: not having devotion towards one's preceptor abandoning one's preceptor, sleeping on the preceptor's bed, drinking intoxicating drinks, having illicit relationship with one's teacher's wife, taking back the wealth which has already been donated, earning wealth by employing improper means.

A man who commits the following sins are considered to be the grave sinners - burning a cowshed, a forest or a city, not marrying a girl with a suitable man, having illicit relationship with daughter in law, and sister in law.

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THE DESCRIPTION OF HELL

Each living being has to taste the fruits of his 'Karmas', when his soul reaches the abode of Yama after his death. The soul of a virtuous man

enters the hell from the Northern side, where as that of sinful man enters from the southern side.

Yamanagri - The abode of Yama is situated at a distance of eighty six thousand yojans (One Yojans - Eight miles) from the surface of the earth.

The virtuous soul reaches there without any problem because of his virtuous deeds. On the contrary, the soul of a sinner reaches Yamanagri tasting the fruits of his sins all along the way. Moreover, when the soul of a sinner reaches Yamanagri, it gets punished by the 'Yamadutas'. The lord of death then gives the final judgement on the basis of each individual's sins.

From the hell the virtuous soul leaves for the heaven. There are many categories of hells all filled up with filth.

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CHARITY AND ITS IMPORTANCE

Suta while warning the sages told-

"People who engages themselves in virtuous deeds through out their lives and who have been kind of others, cross the terrifying path of the hell quite easily. A person, who donates shoes or wooden sandals to brahmins, reaches the hell riding on the horse.

Similarly, a person who donates an umbrella to brahmins reaches the hell under the shade of an umbrella. Making donations of bed or chairs to brahmins, help a man to reach the hell after taking adequate rest on the way. Making donations of Gold or silver to brahmin helps a man to attain to heaven."

A man who donated food grains enjoys all the pleasures of life, because food grains sustain life. Even, making donation of water is considered to be of supreme value because life can not exist without it. A man, who digs up wells and ponds for the benefit of people, acquires great virtues. Planting trees, especially which gives fruits or flowers are considered to give immeasurable virtues.

Making donations of cow, land, knowledge and such objects that can be weighed are considered. Making donations of gold, sesame, elephant, girl, maid, servant, house, chariot, diamond, cow whose colour is pure white and food grains are considered to be Mahadan (great donation). The donations should be made only to worthy brahmins.

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DESCRIPTION OF NETHERWORLD AND LIBERATION FROM HELL

The earth is balanced on the hood of Sheshnag. Lord Vishnu is the nurturer of this world. There are seven more worlds beneath the earth,

which are Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Rasatala, Tala, Talatala and Patal. Each of these worlds is ten thousand yojans in length and twenty thousand yojans deep. All these worlds are full of invaluable and priceless diamonds. The residents of each of these worlds enjoy all the luxuries and pleasures of life. The demons and the Nagas reside in these worlds. Even farther than these seven worlds is situated the hell, Where the soul of the sinner goes to after the death. Some of the main names of hell are - Raurav, Shukar, Rodh, Tal, Vivasan and Mahajwala etc. The soul of a sinner goes to each of these hells according to the magnitude of his sins. A man should worship lord Shiva and sing hymns in his praise to get liberated from his sins.

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THE DESCRIPTION OF SEVEN - ISLANDS

The whole earth is divided into seven islands or dweepas. The name of these islands is Jambu, Plaksha, Shalmali, Kraunch, Shaka and Pushkar.

All these islands are surrounded by such oceans on all sides. The content of each of these oceans is salt. Sugarcane juice, ghee, milk, curds and honey respectively.

Jambudweepa is also known as India. It stretches from south of Himalaya to the north of ocean. The total area is about nine thousand yojans. It is further subdivided into nine land segments, seven mountains, and seven sacred rivers near the seven places of pilgrimage and many other rivers.

Similarly the 'Plaksha' island is surrounded by ocean of salt on all sides and spread up in the area of one thousand yojans.

The area of Shalmali island is twice as that of Plaksha island. It is surrounded by the ocean of honey.

The are of Kusha island is twice as that of Shalmali island and is surrounded by the ocean of ghee. Similarly the Krauncha is surrounded by the ocean of curd and its area is thrice as that of Kusha island.

The area of Shaka island is twice as that of Kraucha island and is surrounded by the ocean of milk.

The ocean of sweet water surrounds the Pushkar island. Its total length is five thousand yojans and five lakh yojans respectively. The mountain Manas is situated in this island. The residents of these islands never attain old age. Lord Brahma resides in Mahaveet section of this island. The people living in this island get food without making any effort.

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THE DESCRIPTION OF PLANETS

As far as the light of Sun and Moon reaches the earth, it is called 'Bhoo loka'. Surya loka is situated one lakh yojan above the Bhooloka. The

Chandra loka is situated one lakh yojan above Surya loka. All the constellations as well as the planets are spread in the area of the ten thousand yojans above the Moon. Mercury is situated above the moon Venus above the Mercury and Mars is situated above the Venus. Jupiter is situated above Mars and Saturn above Jupiter.

The Saptarshi mandals are situated at a distance of one lakh yojan above Saturn. The 'Dhruva' is situated at a distance of one lakh yojan above the Saptarshi Mandals. All the planets are situated between the earth and Dhruva star in the form of three lokas - Bhoo loka, Bhuvar loka and Swarga loka (heaven).

Mahar looka is situated even beyond the Dhruvaloka. This is the world where the manasputras (Sanak sanandan etc) of lord Brahma reside.

Jana loka is situated above Mahaloka where as the Tapaloka is situated at a distance of twenty six lakh yojans above Mahaloka. Satyaloka is situated six times the distance between Mahaloka and Tapaloka. Satyaloka is also known as Brahmaloka. Beyond Brahmaloka is situated the Vaikuntha loka. Similarly the world of Kartikeya Kumar loka is situated beyond Vaikunth loka. After Kumar loka comes the Uma loka and then comes the Shiva loka, which is the farthest loka. Goloka is situated near Shivaloka where lord Krishna lives with the cow names Sushila, with the permission of lord Shiva.

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CATEGORIES OF AUSTERITY OR TAPA

Truth or Satya is the best among all the types of austerity. A truthful man is the supreme devotee and a great accomplisher. Austerity helps a man

to attain all the worldly pleasures of life and ultimately salvation. Austerities have been classified into three types on the basis of three basic qualities or gunas i.e. Satvik tapa, Rajassi tapa and Tamassi tapa.

Austerities observed by the deities' hermits and celibates come under the category of Satvik Tapa.

Austerities maintained by the 'daityas' and man come under the category of Rajasi-Tapa.

Austerities maintained by the demons and those people who indulge in evil and cruel deeds come under the category of Tamasi Tapa.

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THE ORIGIN OF BODY

The food taken by a man gets transformed into semen in the body. The semen is transformed to the woman's womb during the time of

intercourse where it gets mixed with the blood. It then develops into an egg. Gradually all the organs start to manifest. The body then attains the vital force and ultimately comes out from the mother's womb after suffering great pains. But after taking birth he forgets all about those pains. He then lives his life by reaping the fruits of his past Karmas. Before taking birth, the body lives in a filthy environment in its mother's womb. It becomes so dirty that even Panchagavya can not make it pure. Remembrance of Shiva is the only means to make it pure.

CONTROL OVER DEATH (ICHCHHA MRITYU)

Suta told the sages that a person who wants to control death should first be seated on a pure seat. He should then perform Pranayama by holding his breath. While doing this exercise care should be taken that lamp is not burning.

Both the ears should be shut by the index fingers for the period of one hour. After doing this he would be able to hear the sounds emerging from within. He should try to concentrate his mind on that sound. If this exercise is practiced daily for two hours, then he will have full control over his death. This particular exercise helps a man to attain great accomplishments, self-knowledge and salvation.

THE ORIGIN OF BODY

The food taken by a man gets transformed into semen in the body. The semen is transformed to the woman's womb during the time of intercourse where it gets mixed with the blood. It then develops into an egg. Gradually all the organs start to manifest. The body then attains the vital force and ultimately comes out from the mother's womb after suffering great pains. But after taking birth he forgets all about those pains. He then lives his life by reaping the fruits of his past Karmas. Before taking birth, the body lives in a filthy environment in its mother's womb. It becomes so dirty that even Panchagavya can not make it pure. Remembrance of Shiva is the only means to make it pure.

CONTROL OVER DEATH (ICHCHHA MRITYU)

Suta told the sages that a person who wants to control death should first be seated on a pure seat. He should then perform Pranayama by holding his breath. While doing this exercise care should be taken that lamp is not burning.

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THE DESCENT OF GANGA

Once, emperor Sagar performed an Ashwamedha Yagya. Indra abducted the horse used in this Yagya and kept it in the hermitage of Sage Kapila.

All the sixty thousand sons of Sagar went to search the horse and found it in Kapila's hermitage.

Hearing the commotion and noise, sage Kapila who was engrossed in his meditation opened his eyes and came out to see what was happening. He was very angry. He looked angrily towards the sons of Sagar. All of them were burnt to death except four.

In due course of time, Sage Bhagirath became successful in bringing river Ganga to earth with the blessings of lord Shiva. Bhagirath was the descendants of Sagar. Bhagirath made all of his ancestors alive who had met an untimely death by sprinkling the water of Ganga on their bones. River Ganga is also known as Bhagirathi because of Bhagirath.

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THE AUSTERITIES OF VED VYASA

Narrating about the life of Sage Veda Vyasa, Suta said to the sages-

"Once while sage Parashar was on his pilgrimage, he arrived at the bank of Yamuna. Satyavati, who emitted the smell of fish, helped him cross the river. Sage Parashar was very pleased with her. He transformed the bad smell emitting from her body into fragrance. He also told her that she would be fortunate to give birth to a son as mighty as lord Vishnu.

In due course of time Satyavati gave birth to a child. The child was given the name Krishnadwaipayan by Satyavati's father. Soon after his birth the child told his mother that he was going to do penance and he would come back to see her the moment she desired.

The child did tremendous penance and became famous as Veda Vyasa. With this deep knowledge and insight he categorized the different sections of Veda. After the accomplishment of his penance. Veda Vyasa went on a pilgrimage. He came to Kashi with a desire to write the Puranas. To get the blessings of Lord Shiva he worshipped the Madhyeshwar linga. Lord Shiva became pleased by his devotion and blessed him. Ved Vyasa created numerous Puranas like -Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Vishnu Purana, Shiva Purana, Bhagavat Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Narada Purana, Markandeya Purana, Agni Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Linga Purana, Varaha Purana, Kurma Purana, Matsya Purana, Garuda Purana, Vamana Purana, Skanda Purana and Brahmanda Purana.

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INCARNATION OF MAHAKALI

Once upon a time king Surath after loosing his kingdom to his enemy fled to the forest. After wandering for some time he reached the hermitage of

sage Medha. He started living there, as he had no place to go. The dejected king used to pass his time wondering about his future.

One day, Surath met a man named Samadhi, who was driven out from his house by his own sons. His sons had captured all the wealth. Both of them went to sage Medha and narrated about their woeful tales. Sage Medha advised both of them to contemplate on the form of Mahamaya Bhagawati Surath and Samadhi were curious to know about Bhagawati Sage Medha said-

"The demons, Madhu and Kailash were produced from the filth which came out from the ears of lord Vishnu, while he was resting on the back of Sheshnag during the time of total annihilation."

"On seeing lord Brahma sitting on the lotus flower, which emerged from the navel of lord Vishnu, both the demons tried to kill him. Lord Brahma eulogized yoga nidra. So that lord Vishnu could be awakened from the sleep. Goddess Bhagavati became pleased and told Brahma that in a short while from now she would be manifesting herself to kill the demons."

"Bhagavati manifested herself in the form of Kali from the mouth and eyes of lord Vishnu. Meanwhile lord Vishnu awakened from his sleep. He fought with the demons for one thousand years but could not defeat them. At last the demons told lord Vishnu that they wanted to bless him with a boon. Lord Vishnu demanded their death. Seeing water on all sides the demons told him that he could kill them where no water was found. Lord Vishnu then severed their heads after laying them on his thighs."

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INCARNATION OF MAHALAKSHMI

Mahishasur - the son of Rambhasur had captured the heaven after defeating the deities. The sorrowful deities came to seek the help of lord

Vishnu and Lord Shiva.

Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu became extremely furious after hearing about the misdeeds of Mahishasur. Radiant lights appeared from the bodies of Vishnu, Shiva and other deities and collectively manifested into a single form of Mahalakshmi. All the deities presented their respective weapons to her.

Mahalakshmi went to fight Mahishasur, who fought valiantly by changing his appearance, but ultimately got killed by her. The deities became very pleased by the death of Mahishasur. They eulogized and worshipped her.

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INCARNATION OF MAHASARASWATI

After being tormented by the demons Shumbha and Nishumbha, the deities went to goddess Parvati and requested her to protect them.

Kaushiki manifested from the body of goddess Parvati. Goddess Kaushiki assured the deities and disappeared.

By coincidence the attendants of the demons - Shumbha and Nishumbha, happened to see Kaushiki and became enchanted by her divine beauty. They went to Shumbha and Nishumbha and praised about her beauty.

Both the demons sent a messenger to Summon her. Kaushiki asked the messenger to convey the message to the demons that only such a person can become her lord, who defeats her in a battle. The messenger returned and gave the message to Shumbha and Nishumbha.

Both the demons were enraged. They sent a huge army to bring Kaushiki forcible, under the commandership of Dhumralochan. When Dhumralochan reached there, he told her about his master's command. Kaushiki gave the some reply that only such a person can become her master, who defeats her in a battle. Dhumralochan then tried to abduct her forcibly. Kaushiki gave a loud roar in her anger as a result of which Dhumralochan was burnt to death. The whole army was annihilated by her vehicle-lion.

When Shumbha and Nishumbha leamt about the death of Dhumralochan and the destruction of his army, they sent many mighty demons like Chanda, Munda, Raktabeeja etc to fight her. But each of them got killed by goddess Kaushiki.

Ultimately Shumbha and Nishumba themselves came forward to fight. Both of them attacked Kaushiki with volley of arrows. Kaushiki destroyed their whole army. The whole battlefield became flooded with blood. After that Kaushiki killed Nishumbha with special types of arrows, which did not allow single drop of blood to fall on the ground.

Angered by his brother's death, Shumbha attacked Kaushiks with his various weapons, but she neutralized all of them. At last, she killed Shumbha with her trident.

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UMA WARNS THE DEITIES

Once, after having defeated the demons the deities had become very arrogant and proud. They started indulging in self praise. Suddenly they

were started by the emergence of radiant light before them. All the deities became scarred and went to Indra. Indra sent Vayu to test the power of that radiant light. As soon as Vayu reached there, he found that he had become powerless. One by one all the deities came but returned after being defeated. At last Indra himself went there.

As soon as Indra reached there, he found that he had become bereft of all his powers.

Suddenly goddess Uma manifested herself and warned Indra against becoming arrogant. Indra realized his mistake.

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THE INCARNATION OF SHAKAMBARI

The most valiant demon Durgam had acquired all the four Vedas from lord Brahma after pleasing him. Lord Brahma had also given a boon of

invincibility to him.

Durgam became very arrogant and started tormenting the whole world. As the consequence it did not rain for one hundred years and the whole world was hit by drought.

The deities went to goddess Maheshwari (Parvati) and narrated about their woeful tales. Goddess Maheshwari was so moved by their plights that tears rolled down from her eyes for nine continuous days and nights. The tear took the form of a river as the result of which the phase of drought came to an end.

The deities then requested her to recover the Vedas, which were in possession of Durgam. They then went back to their abode. When Durgam saw that people were living happily, he attacked with a large army. At that very moment goddess manifested herself and fought a tremendous battle with Durgam. From her body manifested the ten Mahavidyas and many other goddesses. At last goddess Maheshwari killed Durgam with her trident and recovered the Vedas from his possession. She then handed over the Vedas to the deities. Maheshwari is also known as Shakambhari as she had created river by her tears and saved the lives of people.

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PART SIX KAILASH SAMHITA

CLASSIFICATIONS OF YOGA

Describing about the various types of Yoga, Suta told the sages that there were three types of Yoga - Gyan Yoga, Kriya Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. "Each of them is capable of giving salvation to a man. When the mind or intellect unites with the soul it is called Gyan Yoga. When the soul gets attached with external objects, it is called Kriya yoga. The unification of one's whole being with goddess Bhagawati is called Bhakti Yoga. All these three yogas combinedly are capable of giving salvation to a man. A man becomes a devotee by his actions or Karmas. Devotion or Bhakti helps a man to attain Jnana or knowledge. Jnana or Knowledge gives salvation. Yoga is the path through which a man can attain liberation whereas Kriya-yoga is the chief means to attain it.

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CONDUCTS OF A SANYASI

A Sanyasi should wake up early in the morning. After getting up he should remember his preceptor or Guru and then he should pray to

express his gratitude towards his Guru.

After that he should practice Pranayama and try to concentrate his mind on the six chakras present in his bodies.

After the completion of Pranayama and concentration on the six chakras he should finish his daily routines. After applying 'ashes' on his body he should chant the sacred mantras and perform 'tarpana'. Subsequently he should perform Achaman and then practice Pranayama for three times. After that he should remember the sages or rishis. While going to do worship, he should maintain silence all along the way. He should do worship only after washing his feet and performing Achaman.

A Sanyasi should paste the ground with cow dung and construct a quadrangular 'Mandap'. He should then keep a broad leaf of Palm tree at its center. He should then fence the area with coloured threads from all the four directions. After that he should draw a eight petalled flower in the center of the Mandap, upon which he should draw a Shiva Yantra. At last he can commence his worship of the Sun god.

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THE GREATNESS OF PRANAV MANTRA

Sage Vamadev was a great devotee of lord Shiva from his birth. He never used to remain at a place for long. One day he had gone to a mountain

peak named Kumar, which was situated towards the south of Sumeru Mountain. He met Kartikeya who revealed to him that Pranav Mantra directly signifies the almighty God. Kartikeya also told him that with the help of that mantra a person can attain lord Shiva - who liberates from all the bondage of life.

Though, Vamadeva himself knew about the power of Pranav mantra yet he requested Kartikeya to shed some more light on it. Kartikeya told him that any one could have the proximity of lord Shiva, by the help of the means prescribed in the Shrutis and the Samritis.

Regarding the methods of Shiva's worship, Kartikeya told Vamadeva that though Sadashiva was one, yet he was known by various names like Maheshwar, Rudra, Brahma and Vishnu. Mahesh was created from the thousandth part of Sadashiva. The goddess of all illusions - Bhagawati dwells in the left side of Sadashiva, therefore he is the lord of all the actions of the universe. Sadashiva plays his desire acts by indulging in creation, nurturement and annihilation of this worl

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INITIATION AND LAST RITES OF A SANYASI

Vamadeva requested Kartikeya to enlighten his mind with that knowledge, without which a Sanyasi can never attain liberation.

Kartikeya then told him about the methods how a Sanyasi should get initiation from his guru. A disciple should worship his guru in any of the following months - Shravana, Ashwin, Kartik, Agahan and Magh. He should then establish a Kalash and worship it. He should again worship his guru considering him as the form of Shiva.

The guru should then initiate him with the Shiva mantra. After getting the Mantra, the disciple should chant it considering himself as Shiva-Shivoaham. After this the disciple should get his head tonsured. The barber who is supposed to shave off the hairs should be given pure clothes to wear. The barber should also wash his hands with mud and water. The instruments and apparatus, which he is supposed to use, should be made pure by the 'Astra' mantras.

First of all the front portion of the head should be shaved off after that the back portion of the head should be shaved off. The disciple should then get his beards and moustache shaved off. After this the disciple should massage his body with mud and take bath by taking twelve dips in a pond. After taking his bath he should worship his Guru and meditate on lord Shiva.

Kartikey told Sage Vamadev that an ascetic does not die but takes a Samadhi, therefore instead of being cremated he is buried. Therefore an ascetic must practice the art of Samadhi to perfection. If he has not yet perfected the art of Samadhi, then he should keep on practicing yoga till he attains mastery over the art of Samadhi. He should try to concentrate his mind on the Omkar mantra, which is eternal. If his body has become weak and feeble and incapable of doing physical exercises like Pranayama then he should indulge himself in Shiva remembrance. This way an ascetic can attain to heaven. After his death the rest of the ascetics should perform the rituals at his place of death for ten days.

An altar should be constructed on the eleventh day. Five quadrangular mandals should be made facing towards the northern direction. In each of these mandas, deities like Deveshwari, Atiwahak etc. should be established first and then worshipped. The worship should be done as per the instruction of Guru by offering 'Prasada'. This Prasada should be, given to a virgin girl or cow, later on. The articles used in the process of worship should be immersed in the river or pond. In this way, the Parvan

shradha ceremony of the deceased ascetic is accomplished. It is worth nothing that 'Ekodishta' Shradha is not performed after an ascetic death.

After the completion of 'Parvan Shradha' the ascetic should perform the Ekadashah Shradha as per the instructions of their Guru. On the twelfth day, the ascetics should invite the brahmins, after getting up in the morning and taking their bath. These brahmins should be feeded.

The ascetics should then take a vow to worship their Guru by holding a 'Kusha' grass in their hands. After that, they should wash the lotus feets of their Guru and worship him. Even the worship of Guru's teacher should be done.

After the worship is over, the Guru should get up by saying 'Shubhamastu'- benediction to all. He should then sprinkle the purified rice by chanting mantras. At last donations should be made to the invited brahmins.

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PART SEVEN VAYVIYA SAMHITA

THE ORIGIN OF VIDYA (KNOWLEDGE)

There are fourteen types of learning or Vidyas - four Vedas, Six Vedangs, Meemansa, Nyay, Puranas and other religious scriptures. These fourteen learning along with Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandharvaveda and Arthashastra becomes eighteen. All these eighteen learning's originate from lord Shiva.

Lord Shiva created lord Brahma to felicitate the process of creation and bestowed him with all these eighteen learning's. He also empowered lord Vishnu to protect the creation.

The four Vedas emerged from the mouth of Lord Brahma, on the basis of which were created the numerous scriptures like Vedangs etc. Since these Vedas were difficult to understand, therefore lord Vishnu took incarnation of Vyasa and created the Puranas, so that they could be understood easily. The Puranas contain four lakh shlokas and they help us to understand the essence of the Vedas.

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THE TALE OF NAIMISHARANYA

Once, lord Brahma released his Manomaya chakra and instructed the sages to follow it. He also told them that the place at which the

Manomaya chakra broke down would be very auspicious for doing penance.

The sages followed the Manomaya chakra, which after travelling for a long time fell down on a large segment of land and its circumference (Nemi) broke down as predicted by lord Brahma. This segment of land became famous as Naimisharanya.

The sages decided to perform a Yagya at that sacred place. This way the very place, sitting where lord Brahma did creations. All the sages commenced their Yagya, which continued for ten thousand years. On the completion of Yagya, the deity arrived there and blessed them as per the instruction of lord Brahma.

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TIME, CALCULATION, AND YUGAS

Describing about the time (Kala), Vayudeva told the sages that 'Kala' or time is the radiance of lord Shiva. Kala or time is also known as 'Kalatma'.

The time flows smoothly without being disturbed.

Time is under the control of lord Shiva. Since the time contains the element of Shiva (Shivattatva), hence its momentum can not be checked by any other power, except that of Shiva. One, who understands the meaning of Kala, has a darshan of lord Shiva.

The smallest unit for measuring the time is called 'Nimesh'. The time taken to drop one's eyelid is called one Nimesh. A kala consists of fifteen Nimeshas and thirty Kalas make a 'Muhurta'.

A day and a night consist of thirty 'Muhurtas'. A month consists of thirty days, divided into two fortnights. One fortnight is known as 'Krishna Paksha (dark lunar phase) and the other is known as Shukla Paksha (bright lunar phase).

In Pitarloka the day consists of one fortnight and night of the same number of days. Shukla Paksha is the day of the Pitraloka and Krishna Paksha the night.

One 'Ayana' consists of Six months. A year consists of two 'Ayanas'. One year of the earth is equivalent to a day and a night of the deities. The six months when Sun is in the southern hemisphere of the earth, is actually the time when the deities experience night. On the contrary, the six months when sun is in the northern hemisphere, is the day time of the deities. One year of the deities is equivalent to three hundred and sixty years of this world.

The yugas are counted on the basis of the years of the deities. According to the scholars there are four yugas - Satya Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dwapar Yuga and Kali Yuga.

A Satya Yuga is equivalent to four thousand years of the deities.

A Treta Yuga is equivalent to three thousand years of the deities.

Similarly a Dwapar Yuga is equivalent to two thousand years of the deities and a Kali Yuga to that of one thousand years of the deities.

This way all the four yugas collectively are equivalent to twelve thousand

years of the deities.

A Kalpa consists of one thousand Chaturyugas. A Manvantar consists of seventy one Chaturyugas.

One Kalpa is inhibited by fourteen Manus one after another in succession.

A Brahma's day is equivalent to one divine Kalpa. A Brahma's year is equivalent to one thousand Kalpas. A Brahma's yuga consists of eight thousand such years.

A Brahma's 'Savan' consists of his one thousand yugas. Brahma's life span is complete after three thousand such Saw anas. Five lakh and forty thousand numbers of Indras succeed one after another during the whole life span of Brahma.

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A Vishnu day is equivalent to the whole life span of Brahma. The whole life span of Vishnu is equivalent to a day of 'Rudra'. The whole life span of Rudra is equivalent to a day of lord Shiva. In the whole life of lord Shiva five lakh and four thousand numbers of Rudras come and go.

A Shiva's day commences with the creation and before the end of the night the whole creation gets annihilated. Sadashiva is eternal.

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MEDITATION

Describing about meditation Vayudeva told the sages that to concentrate one's restless mind during meditative state, a man needs some kind of form (Swarupa) or appearance. Idol worship is very helpful in this regard. If an idol of the deity is worshipped with full devotion, then a time comes when a man can have its sight even in an empty space. Idol worship also helps a devotee to reach towards the almighty God, who is formless. It is easy for a devotee who believes in 'Sakar' (with form) to change over to the Nirakar (formless) worship of God. But it is very difficult for a devotee who believes in the formless almighty to switch over to Sakar mode of worship. The knowledge of Shiva's essence is a must attain salvation in both the modes of devotion.

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PASHUPAT VRATA RITUALS CONNECTED WITH SHIVA'S WORSHIP

One being asked by the sages about the rituals which gives salvation, Vayudeva told them that by having devotion towards lord Shiva, a man

can achieve all the pleasures of the world and even attain salvation. Vayudeva also told them about Pashupat Vrata and the benefits derived from it.

The whole Pashupat Vrata is divided into five parts - Kriya, Taipei, Tapa, Dhyana and Gyan. The Shaiva-dharma is the supreme religion and the rituals pertaining to it are based on the Shruits and the Smritis. Pashupat Vrata has been mentioned in the Vedas as the bestower of Supreme knowledge. It also contains all the eight organs of yoga, which were created by lord Shiva himself. Lord Shiva is easily pleased if worship is done by this method. The devotee attains supreme knowledge and becomes liberated from all the bondage's of this world.

Pashupat Vrata has been mentioned even in the Atharvasheersha Upanishad. It begins on the full moon day, in the month of Chaitra. It can be performed anywhere - a Shiva temple, any sacred place of pilgrimage, forest or garden.

A devotee should get up early in the morning, on the thirteenth day of bright lunar phase (two days preceding the full moon day) and after finishing his daily duties he should make salutations to his Guru. With the permission of his guru, the devotee should then put on while coloured clothes and a sacred thread of the same colour. He should also wear a white garland around his neck and apply sandal wood paste on his body. He should then sit on the seat made of Kusha grass and take a vow by holding a Kusha grass in his hand. After this he should do Havana by offerings articles into the sacred fire. He should observe a fast for the whole day and break it only in the night by having 'Prasada'.

This ritual should be repeated on the following day but the fast should not be broken in the night. On the final day, that is full moon day he should repeat all the rituals and after putting off the fire of the Havana Kunda, he should smear his body with the ashes. He should then take his bath and put on dear's skin or bark of the tree. He should also hold a stick and put on a waist band (Mekhala). After that he should again rinse (Achaman) his mouth and smear ashes on his body. He should perform the exercise of Ashtanga yoga. Three times in a day as per the instructions of his guru. This way a man is freed from the beastly qualities present in him.

Pashupat Vrata can be performed by a devotee as long as he is alive or he can continue it for twelve years of three years or one year or six months or one month, or twelve days or three days or even one day. On the completion of Pashupat Vrata, a devotee should establish a Shiva idol and worship it with all the sixteen modes of worship. At last he should perform Awaran Pujan and then worship his guru. Through out the period of fast, a devotee should have fruits only and he should sleep on the bare land. Pashupat Vrata done in such a way helps a devotee to attain to the abode of lord Shiva.

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INTRODUCTION OF THE UNIVERSE

Vayudeva told the sages who had assembled at Naimisharanya that goddess Gauri was the manifestation of Shiva's power and Shankar the

omnipotent almighty. Both Shiva and goddess Shiva contain fathomless splendours of which only a fraction is visible in this world. This world is under the control of Shiva and goddess Shiva. Both of them are inseparable. Just as the light of the sun can not exist without the Sun in the same way goddess Shiva can not exist without lord Shiva. Just as a lifeless body is of no use similarly the world can not exist without goddess Shakti.

This illusionary world is tied up with the delusionary ropes of Shiva and Shakti. The whole creation is the appearance of Almighty Shiva. The ignorant sages describe it in different ways according to their own perceptions. But, the fact is that Shiva is one and this world is the creation of his illusions. A man can attain liberation from this illusionary world only when he has the blessings of Shiva.

Lord Shiva is beyond the reach of lust, attachment and pleasures. His existence is separate from the nature, delusion, intelligence and ego. He is free from all the bondage's.

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DUTIES OF A BRAHMIN

An ideal brahmin is supposed to perform the following duties:-

a) Trikal Sandhya (worshipping thrice a day) b) Havan (offerings made to the sacred fire) c) Worship of Shivalinga d) Making donations A brahmin should also have the following qualities:- a) To see god in each soul b)Compassion c) Virtuous conducts d) Satisfaction e) Belief in God f) Non violence g)Devotion h) Regular Vedas study i) Practicing Yoga j) Preaching teachings of Vedas k)Giving lectures on the religious scriptures. I) Being a celibate m) Penance n)Having a Shikha and a scared thread etc.

A brahmin should never have food during the night and should contently chant the 'Om Namah Shivay' mantra. Lord Shiva is not pleased that much by rituals as by faith and devotion. A man who worships lord Shiva while maintaining the rules of 'vama ashrama dharma', has the blessings of lord Shiva and all of his desires are fulfilled.

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CHANTING OF MANTRAS AND ESTABLISHING DEITIES WITHIN BODY

After getting initiated with the Shiva mantra, a devotee should chant it for

once crore times or fifty lakh times, or twenty lakh times or ten lakh times, while worshipping Shiva. 'Havana' should be performed for tenth part of the total chanting. 'Tarpan' should be performed for tenth part of the number of Havana. Similarly 'Marjan' should be performed for the tenth part of the numbers of Tarpan. The numbers of Brahmins selected for feeding should be equivalent to the tenth part of the numbers of Marjan.

At last the disciple should give donations to the brahmins and engage himself in the welfare of society as per the instructions of his Guru.

Asceticism (Nyas) are of three types - Sthiti (posture) Utpatti (origin) and Laya (fusion).

Establishing and chanting the cryptic mantras (alphabets) from the thumb to the little finger is called 'Sthiti nyas'.

Establishing and then chanting the cryptic mantras from the right thumb to the left thumb is called "Utpatti nyas'.

Establishing and then chanting the cryptic mantras from the left thumb to the right thumb is called 'Laya Nyas'.

'Sthiti' nyas should be practiced by the householders 'Utpatti nyas' should be practiced by the celibates 'Laya nyas' should be practiced by those people who have relinquished the world (Vanprasth).

A widow should practice Sthiti Nyas. An unmarried girl should practice Utapatti Nyas.

These modes of Nyas should be practiced only after being taught by the Guru.

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MENTAL WORSHIP OF SHIVA

While doing a mental worship of Shiva, a devotee should worship lord Ganesha by following the 'Nyas' mode of worship. After that he should

worship various deities related with lord Shiva like Nandi etc. Then he should bring the form of lord Shiva into his imagination and worship him mentally by making mental offerings.

The devotee should then perform Havana in the navel of lord Shiva by offering ghee. The worship should be accomplished by meditating on the form of Shiva.

The devotee should take his seat only after purifying it. He should take a vow after completing all the necessary rituals like 'Achaman'. Pranayama, tying a knot in his Shikha.

After doing the 'Deepa Pujan' he should worship various deities like Sun god, Moon god, Varuna, Ganesha and Kartikeya etc. He should then worship both Shiva and Shakti by employing all the sixteen modes of worship (Shodasopachar). The devotee should perform 'arti' in the end.

In the specialized form of Shiva's worship 'Awaran Pujan' of Shiva is done along with the normal pujan. Awaran Pujan means worship of all the articles connected with lord Shiva like his trident his drum etc. In this specialized worship the Shiva's idol should be bathed first of all. Then the idol should be clothed. A sacred thread should be offered to the Shiva's idol along with the other offerings like 'tilak', Akshat etc. After this the 'awaran pujan of Shiva should be done along with the worship of Shiva's family.

If the devotee feels that something was lacking in the worship, he should atone for that mistake by chanting the Panchakshar mantra Om Namah Shivay.

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METHOD OF PERFORMING 'HAVANA'

While performing a Shiva Yagya a devotee should make offerings to the 'havanakunda' made of iron or mud. Fire should be ignited in the

havankunda following the methods as prescribed in the scriptures. He can then commence the actual worship.

The devotee should make of offerings of ghee with Sruva (a wooden spoon) and other articles with his hands. The offerings should be first made in the names of lord Brahma (Prajapati) then to the nine planets and other deities. After that offerings should be made in the name of the chief deity.

The devotee should then make nine offerings to each of the deities like Agni, Vayu and Surya etc. At last he should perform the arti and atone for those mistakes, which he might have committed during the whole process of worship. He should also give donations to the brahmins and feed them.

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AUSPICIOUS DAYS FOR DOING SHIVA WORSHIP

The eighth day and the fourteenth day of both the fortnights of each Hindu month are considered to be the most auspicious for the worship of

lord Shiva.

Similarly the solstice day (Sankranti), when the sun is positioned north of equator and eclipse day are considered to be very auspicious. On these days a special worship of lord Shiva should be done by bathing the Shiva idol with Panchagavya and having it is prasadam. It frees a man from the gravest of sins. Similarly the day of 'Pushya' Nakshatra falling in the month of 'Pausha' is considered as very auspicious and performing arti of Shiva on this day gives immense virtues.

Making donations of Ghee and blankets on Magha Nakshatra' falling in the month of Magh gives immense virtues.

The following days are considered to be the most auspicious for the worship of lord Shiva.

Uttara Falguni Nakshatra on the same day as Pumima, in the month of Falgun.

Chitra Nakshatra falling on the same day as Purnima in the month of Chaitra.

Vishakha Nakshatra falling on the same day as Pumima, in the month of Vaishakh.

Moola Nakshatra falling in the month of Jyeshtha.

Uttarashadha Nakshatra falling in the month of 'Ashadha'.

Shravana Nakshatra falling in the month of Shravana.

Uttara bhadra Nakshatra falling in the month of 'Bhadra'.

Pumima in the month of Ashwin.

Kartika Nakshatra falling on the same day as Purnima in the month of Kartik.

Ardra Nakshatra falling in the month of Margasheersha DESIRABLE RITUALS (KAMYA KARMA)

Rituals can be categorized in to two types-

1) Rituals performed with the objective of fulfilling worldly desires. 2) Rituals pertaining to Ultra mundan desires.

In general, rituals can be classified into five categories - rituals, penance, chanting of mantras, meditation, and all the four collectively.

For performance of rituals a man needs power and strength and one can not achieve power unless and until Shiva wishes it. It is only with the blessings of Shiva that a man can attain both worldly pleasures as well as liberation.

AUSPICIOUS DAYS FOR DOING SHIVA WORSHIP

The eighth day and the fourteenth day of both the fortnights of each Hindu month are considered to be the most auspicious for the worship of lord Shiva.

Similarly the solstice day (Sankranti), when the sun is positioned north of equator and eclipse day are considered to be very auspicious. On these days a special worship of lord Shiva should be done by bathing the Shiva idol with Panchagavya and having it is prasadam. It frees a man from the gravest of sins. Similarly the day of 'Pushya' Nakshatra falling in the month of 'Pausha' is considered as very auspicious and performing arti of Shiva on this day gives immense virtues.

Making donations of Ghee and blankets on 'Magha Nakshatra' falling in the month of Magh gives immense virtues.

The following days are considered to be the most auspicious for the worship of lord Shiva.

Uttara Falguni Nakshatra on the same day as Purnima, in the month of Falgun.

Chitra Nakshatra falling on the same day as Purnima in the month of Chaitra.

Vishakha Nakshatra falling on the same day as Purnima, in the month of Vaishakh.

Moola Nakshatra falling in the month of Jyeshtha.

Uttarashadha Nakshatra falling in the month of 'Ashadha'.

Shravana Nakshatra falling in the month of Shravana.

Uttara bhadra Nakshatra falling in the month of 'Bhadra'.

Purnima in the month of Ashwin.

Kartika Nakshatra falling on the same day as Purnima in the month of Kartik.

Ardra Nakshatra falling in the month of Margasheersha

DESIRABLE RITUALS (KAMYA KARMA)

Rituals can be categorized in to two types-

1) Rituals performed with the objective of fulfilling worldly desires. 2) Rituals pertaining to Ultra mundan desires.

In general, rituals can be classified into five categories - rituals, penance, chanting of mantras, meditation, and all the four collectively.

For performance of rituals a man needs power and strength and one can not achieve power unless and until Shiva wishes it. It is only with the blessings of Shiva that a man can attain both worldly pleasures as well as liberation.

These rituals (Kamya Karma) are performed by making a mandal facing towards east and doing 'awaran pujan' as well as worship of lord Shiva. Worship of lord Shiva done in this way fulfills all the desires of a man.

The methods for the worship of five 'awarans' of Shiva have been mentioned in Shivamahastotra. Each of the 'awarans' have separate presiding deities, the worship of which should be done according to the methods as described in the Shiva Purana or as per the instruction of Guru.

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INSTALLATION OF SHIVALINGA

According to the scriptures, a Shivalinga should be made in an auspicious moment. The land, where the Shivalinga is supposed to be installed

should be purified by performing 'Bhoomi-Pujan'.

After bhoomi-Pujan, worshipping lord Ganesha should be done. After that, the Shivalinga should be purified by washing it with panchgavya and after worshipping it, it should be immersed in the water.

The Shivalinga should be then taken out from the water and after worshipping it, it should be laid down on the bed meant for him. It should be then installed at the desired place and should be consecrated by chanting the mantras. All the rituals should be performed as per the instructions of Guru.

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CLASSIFICATION OF YOGA

Yoga means such actions, which after pacifying all the human tendencies helps a man to unite with Shiva. Following are the five divisions of yoga-

1) Mantra Yoga, 2) Sparsh Yoga (union of touch), 3) Bhava Yoga (union by devotion), 4) Abhava yoga (Union without being emotionally attached), 5) Mahayoga (The great union).

Mantra yoga helps a man to understand the meaning of mantras and uniting with Shiva by the concentration of mind. When Mantra yoga is perfected by the practice of Pranayama it is called 'Sparshyoga'. Bhavayoga means meditating and chanting without uttering a word. Abhava yoga means such a union when the devotee contemplates on the final annihilation, without being emotionally attached with the world.

A man whose mind is preoccupied with the thoughts of Shiva is supposed to have attained the state of Mahayoga. A yogi can unite with Shiva after purifying his body with the help of Pranayama etc.

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OBSTACLES AND DIVINE POWERS IN THE PATH OF YOGA

There are possibilities of numerous obstacles being faced by a man who practices yoga like laziness, disease, carelessness, lack of concentration,

confusion and sorrow etc. While practicing yoga, one must try to keep himself free from such demerits.

After becoming liberated from these flaws a man can easily attain six types of accomplishment -talent (Pratibha), super power of hearing (Shravana), excellent conversational power and power of speech (Vrata), Divine sight (Darshan), Divine power of taste (Aswad), Divine power of touch (Vedana). The capability of seeing things situated at distant places is called 'Pratibha'. The ability to listen without making any effort is called 'Shravana'. The ability to decipher the meaning of animal's language is called 'Vrata'. Being able to see divine things without making any effort is called 'Darshan'. The power, which enables a man to know about the taste of a thing without actually tasting it, is called 'Aswad'. 'Vedana' means the knowledge of all types of touch.

A devotee can attain all types of accomplishment merely by having devotion towards lord Shiva and by meditating on him. In the beginning, a yogi should try to meditate on the form of Shiva (Saguna), but later on the switch over to Shiva's formless (nirguna) quality. Meditating on nirguna form of Shiva is not easy. It can be mastered only by constant and steady practice. When mastered it bestows all kinds of accomplishment. Meditation combined with Pranayama gives four types of accomplishments peace (Shanti), tranquility (Prashanti), luster (Dipti) and boon (Prasad). A devotee can have a darshan of lord Shiva if he does meditation with non attachment.

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SANATKUMAR RECEIVES SHIVA-GYAN FROM NANDI

The sages thanked Vayudeva for giving the knowledge of Jnana Yoga. The next day, they took bath in river Saraswati and performed their worship

and rituals. After that they proceeded towards Kashi. At Kashi after taking their bath in river Ganga they had a darshan of lord Vishwanath. They saw very radiant effulgence appearing in the sky, in which they saw thousand sages who had accomplished Pashupat Vrata getting merged. The radiant effulgence vanished in no time.

The sages were very curious to know about that radiant effulgence, so they went to lord Brahma and asked him about it. Lord Brahma told them that the radiant effulgence had actually instructed them to accomplish Pashupat Vrata and attain Salvation. Lord Brahma then instructed them to go to the Sumeru mountain where Nandi was supposed to come and teach the methods of doing Pashupat Vrata to Sanatkumar.

Once Sanatkumar became very arrogant of his asceticism. One day lord Shiva arrived at his place but Sanatkumar did not get up to greet him. At this Nandi became furious and cursed him to become a camel. Sanatkumar got transformed into a camel. Lord Brahma worshipped Shiva to liberate his son- Sanatkumar from the curse. Lord Shiva became pleased and blessed Sanatkumar, as the result of which he regained his human body.

After regaining his human body Sanatkumar commenced a tremendous penance. Lord Shiva instructed Nandi to go to Sumeru mountain and preach Sanatkumar.

The sages reached Sumeru mountain as per the instruction of lord Brahma. They saw many sages meditating at the bank of a pond. They also saw Sanatkumar engrossed in his meditation at a little distance from the other meditating sages.

The sages went near Sanatkumar and told him about their penances done for ten thousand years. They also revealed to him about the purpose of their arrival. Right then, Nandi arrived there, accompanied by his ganas Sanatkumar and all the sages welcomed him. Sanatkumar introduced all the sages to Nandi and told him about their tremendous penance done for ten thousand years. Nandi became very pleased and blessed them. He then preached Sanatkumar and all the sages on the Shiva tattva.

Sanatkumar passed on that knowledge to Sage Vyasa, who again passed it

on to Suta. Suta then revealed this knowledge to those sages who had assembled at Prayag. After receiving that knowledge from Suta all the sages went to Prayaga tirtha and took their bath. As they saw the signs of approaching Kali Yuga, they went to Kashi and performed the Pashupat Vrata. All of them attained liberation with the blessings of Lord Vishnu.

Listening to Shiva Purana for one time liberates a man from all of his sins. Listening to it for two times helps him to develop devotion in lord Shiva. Listening to Shiva Purana for three times, helps a man to attain to the abode of Shiva.

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